The Republican Trends in Ancient India

SHOBHA MUKERJI

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with a foreword by

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DEDICATION

to

MY MASTER

the inspirer of all my endeavours

PREFACE

It has been impressed upon the world intelligentsia by some thinkers and writers like Max Müller and others that India taught the West the mystery of life and death yet she had not known in the past how to organize social and political life herself. Many believe even to this day that, Indian sages made myriads of experiments in the field of philosophy but none in the affairs of the state. A large number of Indian scholars with their pro-western bias believe that almost all the modern constitutions of democratic-republics have been drawn mainly on the lines of Great Britain and the United States of America. They refuse to entertain the view that republican trends had gained deep roots in the Indian soil, long before the western democracies attained civilized form.

Dr. K. P. Jayaswal for the first time took a bold step in lifting the heavy curtain that had long been drawn on Hindu polity. He told the world and his own countrymen, very firmly that, besides great monarchies, India had seen the excellent working of several republics and federal republics. The question thus raised by him had since been examined by many eminent Indologists like Oldenberg, Rhys David followed by eminent Indians like the Bhandarkar brothers, N. N. Law, B. C. Law, Majumdar and Ghoshal. These scholars have, in general, supported Jayaswal's opinion and have supplied more evidences in favour of their thesis. Some of them, in their nationalistic fervour, have stated that the Indian republics were democratic.[1] In contradiction, some western Indologists said that ordinarily Indian republics were oligarchic. I personally feel, Dr. U. N. Ghoshal was correct when he said, referring to these opinions, "these republics were neither democracies in the sense of a political term nor oligarchies. Such contentions are not supported by authentic evidence. They are also inherently impossible."[2]

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[1] U. N. Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture,* pp. 366-67. Reference to Dr. R. C. Majumdar's Statement on 'Democratic constitution of Republics.

The special purpose of this book is to determine the nature of ancient Indian republics and their variations. This could only be accomplished after an analysis of the theories and institutions prevalent in the ancient days. It has, however, been done according to the principles and definitions accepted by our times. This has helped in reaching the conclusion that a republic may not necessarily be democratic nor is it true that Indian republics were ordinarily oligarchic. By a systematic study of the origin and growth of the concept of a republic in ancient India it has been clearly shown here that majority of the Indian republics were a special type of aristocracy.

I started re-searching the major and minor republics of ancient India since the times of the Buddha and came to the conclusion that ancient India had experimented successfully in the art of state and government. Detailed records of the rise and fall of various types of non-monarchical states are available in the Buddhist literature, the great epics, the works of the *Artha-śāstra* writers, the accounts of the Greek historians, the age-old coins and inscriptions.

From the study of available constitutions one can very well prove that the republican states of different ages had shown special acumen in particular aspects of governmental organizations. The *Licchavis,* for instance, won the applause of the historians because of their democratic administration of law of Justice. There are other instances of smaller republics where the theory of checks and balances had been successfully practised through specially organized institutions like double-kingships or a single man's authority balanced by the authority of councillors.

Throughout my study of the states I deeply felt that it was not the political aspect alone, the non-political organizations also bore clear impressions of the republican trends. The ways and means of corporate life had permeated through the religious, educational and urban and pastoral social life. The

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[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 366-67.

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common folk in ancient India did not enjoy universal franchise yet they breathed the republican air in the true sense. Political equality was, perhaps, not as manifest in the legislative organs, as it is today but equality at the well-side or before the court of law can certainly not be put at a discount. It has been my endeavour in this work to study and explain the many facets of our intellectual attainment and without knowing which, in the words of late Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, "no Indian deserves to be called an educated man."

The study of the republican polity of ancient India is also instructive in the sense that it gives us the causes of the fall and disappearance of the republican states. The Mahābhārata has clearly said that dissention and disunity have ever been the reason of the fall of a *Saṁgharājya.* Economic resources and self-protective powers increase if the units of a republic remained together. Disunion amongst the equals and disloyalty to superiors are the death-knell for the self-governing people. This book might prove an interesting reading for the students of ancient history as well as polity.

This work was carried out under the guidance of Dr. M. P. Sharma, the then Professor and Head of the department of Political Science and presently the Vice-chancellor of Saugor University (M.P.), and was approved for the degree of Doctors of Philosophy in the academic session 1963-64. The thesis would not have attained this form without the invaluable and generous guidance of the Professor. My special gratitude goes to Prof. K. D. Bajpai, Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Saugor, who improved and enriched the thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. R. K. Dikshit, the present Head of the Department of Ancient History and Culture, Lucknow University who initiated me into the subject and encouraged by providing facilities to consult the University library. I am particularly obliged to the Superintendent, Department of Archaeological Survey (Government of India), Central Circle, Bhopal, for giving me facilities to use the library of the department. I am thankful to many other friends who helped me variously in bringing out this work.

Before closing it will be desirable to mention that, in this book certain Indian pronunciations have been written different-

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ly in Roman. The reason being simplification of spellings. The instances are given below :

c = च
ch = छ
cch = च्छ , as in Licchavi
v̥ṛ = वृ , as in V̥ṛṣṇi

This has saved us from the additional vowels and consonants. It is hoped that this effort of simplification of spellings will be acceptable to the readers. Lastly, I must express my gratitude to Munshiram Manoharlal, the Oriental Publishers of Delhi who readily accepted the task of giving it the form of a book.

Indore
May, 1969

SHOBHA MUKERJI

CONTENTS

Foreword vii

Preface ix

The Concept of Republican State 1

The essentials of a republican state; Montesquieu's concept; Modern application; Concept of republic in ancient India; Theory and practice of the republican polity in Greece and India during the later ages; Republican trends in the rural social administration; causes of the fall of the republics.

Evidence for the Existence of the Republics .. 31

Republics described in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyi; Republics in the Buddhist and Jain literature; Republics in the Mahābhārata; Varieties of republics in Kautilya's Arthaśāstra; Trade guilds and corporations; Republics mentioned in the Greek accounts; Special types of kingships; Republics under the Mauryas; Aśokan inscriptions; Numismatic evidences.

Kinds of Republics 52

Pāṇini's theory of the classification of states; Kautilya's classification; Republics mentioned in the *Kāśika;* Religious *Saṁghas* described in the Buddhist literature.

Republics During the Buddha's Time (7th–6th c. B.C.) 71

The rise of the Buddhist movement and its significance; The Śākyan Republic; The Federal Republic of the Licchavis and the Videhas; The Mallas; The Koliyas; The Videhas; The village Republics and their success.

Post Buddha Period (C. 500–2nd c. B.C.) .. 100

The age of Pāṇini, The Āyudhajivins. The Pārsavādi *gaṇas;* The yaudheyadi group; The *Trigarta Saṣtha;* The *Pugas;* The Sreṇis, The Vrātas; Indian republics in the Greek accounts; Other smaller communities; Republics during the time of Kautilya.

Republics During the Epic and Post Mauryan Age (2nd c. B.C. to the middle of 4th c. A.D.) .. 127

The States conquered by Nakula; The States conquered by Karṇa; Bhiṣma's views on the *gaṇas;* The Aṇdhaka Vṛṣṇi League; Fate of some major and doubtful entities during and after Mauryan empire; The Arjunāyanas; The Mālavas; The Yaudheyas; The Sibis; The Kuṇindas; The Audumbaras; The Vṛṣṇis.

Republican Trends in the Non-political Organizations 148

The organization of the Buddhist *Saṁgha;* The process of accession and the principle of hegemony in Jainism; Seals and Sealings of the Buddhist *Śaṁgha;* Republican trends in the trade guilds; The importance and status of the *Setthis; Sreṇis* in South India; Republican trends in educational institutions; The Pariśads.

Strength and Drawbacks of the Republics of India .. 174

Synthetic organization of the republics; Longevity of the republics; Moral assets; Ultra-democratic methods of administration; Advanced methods of legislation; Methods of Voting; Freedom of opinion; Common customs and law courts; Love for constitutionality; Material prosperity; Military strength; drawbacks of the *gaṇas;* Internal dissentions; Extreme decentralization; Foreign policy of the republics.

The Disappearance of the Republics 189

Effect of the Buddha's teachings; The effect of universal religion on society; The growing power of the kings; Revival of old religious ideals and rise of *Arthaśāstra* school; Effect of Greek invasion; Disunity of the republics; The rise of the Gupta Empire.

Legacy of the Republics of Ancient India .. 196

Sovereignty of Dharma and Law; Independent village *Paṇcas;* The legacy of the trade guild's tradition; Unity in the essentials.

Bibliography 207
Index 215

THE REPUBLICAN TRENDS IN ANCIENT INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF REPUBLICAN STATE

A republic is essentially anti-monarchic:

The concept of 'Republic' has been variously explained from time to time, according to its varying content. In its most elementary meaning, republic is contrasted with monarchy and means a form of state and government in which there is no hereditary monarch. Thus, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the republic is, "a state in which the supreme power rests in the people or in officers elected by them, to whom the people have delegated powers sufficient to enable them to perform the duties required of them. The head of the state is usually elected directly, and in modern usage this fact distinguishes a republic from a monarchy in which the head is hereditary."[1]

Historically, in the western world republic did develop in opposition to monarchy or despotism. "For centuries", says the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, "the tradition of the struggles of the Greek city states for freedom, on the one hand against their tyrants and on the other against the oriental despotism of the Persian Kings kept the republican idea alive. Roman legendary conflict with a kingship, which finally degenerated into tyranny; their heroic devotion to the *salus publica,* their separate attempt to stave off Ceasarism, even the period of complete absolutism did not succeed in obliterating the republican idea."[2]

After an intermediary period dominated by the theory of emperorship with world domination, the breakup of medieval universalism opened the way for republicanism which like its prototypes of the ancient world bore distinctly anti-monarchic features.

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[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. 19. p. 201.

[2] *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* (Vol. XIII). pp. 317—320.

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Literally the word 'republic' means the same thing as the Latin 'respublica' i.e., 'public affairs' or 'the commonwealth.' Cicero, the Roman thinker, says in his "De Re Publica", "the commonwealth is the people's affair"; which, "needs to be ruled by some sort of deliberating authority, in order that it may endure." Cicero further elaborates the constitutional content of republic by adding that, "this authority, in the first place, must always be relative to the peculiar grounds which have brought the particular state into being. It must in the second place, be delegated, either to a single man, or to certain selected persons, or it must be retained by all the members of the group."[3] He also describes the community where a republican state is possible. By 'people', he does not mean the association of people in any manner, "but the coming together of a considerable number of men who are united by a common agreement about law and rights and by the desire to participate in mutual advantages."

Here Cicero seems to be discriminating between an association of men united by a common agreement about law and rights and a simple mob which, "is as tyrannous as if it were a single userer, it is even worse for there is nothing more odious than this monster which apes the appearance and usurps the name of the people."[4]

Republic is a people's affair :

Republic, according to Cicero, is therefore, the people's affair, where the governmental authority must necessarily be delegated either to a single man or to a group of selected persons or if possible, as in smaller city states, be retained by all the members of the group. Cicero's ideas are restated in a different language by Montesquieu.

Montesquieu's conception of a republic :

He assumes a three-fold classification of governments, republican, monarchic and despotic, on the basis of the structure of the governments. According to Montesquieu, "the republican system is that in which sovereign power is possessed by either the whole people or some part of it."[5] He says that every form of government has its peculiar principle. In a republican government this is 'virtue'; not moral or Christian virtue, but political virtue in the strict sense, namely, "love of country and of equality."[6]

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[3] William Y. Elliot and N.A. McDonald, *Western Political Heritage*, pp. 262.

[4] Ibid., p. 263.

A republic need not be a democracy:

Cicero as well as Montesquieu say that a republic need not necessarily be a democracy. The people may delegate power to a single man or a group of selected men. In either case, they should be the men of the choice of the people, exercising authority in moderation. "Moderation" is therefore the virtue of aristocracy. In other words the members of the ruling class in the aristocracy are restrained in their government by consideration both for the lesser people and for one another.

'Moderation' is the virtue of a republican state:

Moderation is thus the soul of aristocratic government in a republican state. Ruling in moderation is necessary in an aristocratic government because republic ultimately means, guarantee of liberty of the citizens at large. Liberty can exist only where possessors of governmental power are subject to limitations. Because power always tends to be abused and unless the constitutional system is so arranged that one power is checked by another the citizen still may lack that security in which liberty consists. A state has to act through agents and ministers to whom the exercise of power is entrusted. "The power so confined, may as in America, be limited. . . ." but in any case, says Prof. Laski, it is nothing more "than a permission to perform such acts as are likely to secure public approval."[7]

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[5] W. A. Dunning, *Political Theories*, Vol. II, p. 399.

[6] Ibid., p. 401.

[7] Harold Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty*, p. 210.

Public approval essential for the govt. in a republic:

Vox Populi, is the chief criterion of a republic. But popular sovereignty, "if it means that the whole people is, in all but executive detail, to govern itself, is an impossible fiction."[8] because running of the government is a specialization of function. Therefore political business has to be confined to a small group of men whose decisions, generally speaking, are accepted by the vast majority. Power always gets itself obeyed because there is a difference between power consciously possessed and power unconsciously possessed which cannot be exercised at all. Therefore popular sanction, in most cases, is almost assured.

America, a modern example :

In our times, the American constitution has tried to incorporate in it, all the concepts discussed above. It is a republic, according to the definitions, cited from Cicero and Montesquieu And "ever since its emergence as an independent political community America has been a political democracy; but we must be careful not to embody in the idea of this political democracy more than it, in fact, implies. It is essentially a democracy of the middle class, which assumes, though it does not announce, the authority of wealth, and has been careful, throughout its history, not to permit its informing idea to jeopardize the claims that men of property invariably put forward as the boundaries beyond which democracy may not pass. Specially after the civil war, the walls which protected property from democratic invasion grew increasingly high. The professional man found that economic comfort was rarely attainable unless he was willing to be dependent of the economic masters of America. The forms of political democracy obscured but did not conceal the fact that they were being based on an economic foundation which was growingly oligarchical in character."[9]

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8. Ibid., p. 214.
9. Harold Laski, *American Democracy,* pp. 17—19.

Reason of the growth of oligarchy in the U.S.A.:

The reason of the growth of oligarchy in the American system, as given by some other authors, is of course different, which is obviously theoretical in character. It is said, "the disorderliness in the formation and execution of policy, which seems to be inevitable in a free political society, has on many occasions led to demands that we get rid of politicians and put 'experts' in charge."[10] That is why, the national assembly, whether congress or parliament, in fact becomes the people, and it derives the right therefrom to exercise completely sovereign powers. Popular sovereignty, thus implies in America, representative government. The real sovereign is the constitution. "The people must act in a way specified in the constitution. Against acts of government the citizen may successfully assent rights; against the sovereign he has no rights."[11]

Theory of separation of power an auxiliary precaution :

The problem before the framers of the American constitution was to create a government for a republican state, which would give the rulers enough power to do an efficient job. And then they must so limit the exercise of this essential power that it will not be used to oppress the individual for whom the government exists. A dependence on the people is no doubt the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions. Therefore Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers was incorporated in the American constitution as a "doctrine of liberty." It was also introduced because the public men generally wished to avoid a concentrated government. But about the practical result of the application of the theory, Laski has to say, "among their functions not the least the courts have performed is to act as a brake on the democratic habits of legislature....they are in a word, a thrid chamber of the legislature in the area of their operation; and it is difficult not to argue that in all major political matters they find it extremely difficult to avoid the temptation to substitute their own ideas of what is politically wise or reasonable for the conclusions at which the elected members of the legislature have arrived. But when the courts in a political system cross the tenuous boundary which separates legal issues from political conclusions, it will usually be found that they are acting however, unconsciously as counsel as against the purposes of democracy."[12]

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[10] Gosnell, Lancaster and Rankin, *Fundamentals of American National Govt.*, p. 23.

[11] Ibid., p. 17.

Practical difficulties of the theory of separation of powers:

The most convinced believers in the doctrine of the separation of powers acknowledged that an absolute separation of the three departments of government would make the government itself impossible. It was therefore necessary to introduce modifications of the pure doctrine by setting up what are called, the "checks and balances." By this scheme, the exercise of powers by one department may be blocked by a 'rival' department and thus compel reconsideration. The net effect of this system has been to encourage, in fact to make necessary, a very considerable degree of common consultation among the several branches with respect to suggest policies.

The powers and position of the American President like those of the Roman Consuls of the ancient times, make us feel that the office is as despotic as that of royal government. The importance and influence of the senate like the senate of ancient Rome would make us imagine that the constitution is a complete aristocracy. Again the role of the people in the national politics would lead one to say that the chief power in the state was the people's and that the constitution was democratic.

It is neither of the three in the absolute sense. It is an arrangement of checks and balances which would maintain the proper equilibrium by the impulsiveness of the one part, being checked by its fear of the other. The ultimate aim of the new system was to perpetuate the republican trend which was vitally important for the American society.

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[12] Harold Laski, *American Democracy*, p. 20.

If we look in retrospection, we find a similar arrangement of checks and balances between the powers of the two kings, the senate and the assembly, in ancient Sparta. The principle that has always been adhered to is that, a republic should be a people's affair. It may not be essentially a democracy, it may be ruled by an assembly or a president, with the consent of the people. The form of government may even be a mixed form as the Romans or the Greeks had, but definitely under an arrangement that would secure the rights, liberties and general welfare of the people at large. Keeping this basic principle in view, it will not be difficult to understand the ancient republican states, either of western or of Indian origin. The republics of the ancient world had their own peculiar features which we must consider in the context of the time they prevailed in.

Double kingship in Sparta :

Many examples might be taken from the Greek, Roman and ancient Indian history of political institutions to show that the character of a republican state was mainly based on this popular sanction behind the power of the government. The City of Sparta had the rare institution of a double kingship. "As kings they were high priests and military leaders, but the bulk of legislative, judicial and executive functions passed to the Senate (Gerousia) and Assembly (Apella). The senate of thirty members, included ex-officio the kings which grew into an advisory body, elected for life tenures by the Assembly. The Assembly was composed of all citizens. . . .and its will was law."[13] People generally refused to accept Spartan constitution as a democratic republic because of the existence of the institution of slavery and consequently the exclusion from citizenship, of a large portion of the population. They held that the Spartan constitution was a democracy from the point of view of the citizen, an oligarchy when we include in our survey all the inhabitants of Lacedaemonia. We find a reconciliation in the opinion of Hobbes who puts it very appropriately. He says: "The liberty whereof, there is so frequent and honourable mention in the histories and philosophies of the ancient Greeks and Romans, is not the liberty of particular men but the liberty of the Commonwealth."[14] However, we can stick to our principle that the spirit of the republic lies actually in the right of the people of being the ultimate source of all political powers.

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[13] Maciver, *The Modern State*, p. 75.

The Roman system was rather strange, wherein two assemblies, one oligarchical in spirit and structure, the other confined to the populace, exercised co-ordinate rights of legislation while ten officials representing the lower orders had severally the right to veto any act of any magistrate. Yet by these devices the Romans attained such a solidarity of citizenship that the two assemblies worked in accord for long periods. "Long absence of dangerous clashes between these bodies and the sovereign council of plebs bears eloquent witness to the fact that the division of power matters less than the community of right."[15]

Cicero realised and distinguished between state as a juridical fact and the social aggregate out of which it was born. He felt the need of an agency or an instrument, to express and enforce the will of the people. Therefore, he said that "this authority deriving its supreme coercive powers from the people themselves, be it a monarchy, an aristocracy or a popular assembly, is the legal sovereign of the state and its mandates have the force of law."[16] It is made crystal clear that the Romans did not see any contradiction in having a monarchical or an aristocratic form of government within a republican form of state.

Concept of Republic in India :

The concept of a republic in ancient India is much older than that of Rome or Greece. The age of the republics goes back to, as early as the seventh and sixth century B.C., to be more exact, the post-vedic period. The ancient Indians knew little of the modern state. Like the Greeks it was only the 'city' of which the writers could speak. Ancient Indian writers have called the republics as "Gaṇas" or "Saṁghas" meaning thereby a community organized by law. The very word 'law' meant to the Greeks 'custom' or 'convention', the same was the outlook here. It was a mode of living, certain beliefs and habits of the people, a corporate life. These beliefs, external habits and principles of living a life formed the basic laws of a republic. We can best explain it with the help of a famous sentence in Burke's 'Reflections on the Revolution in France.' The state, he defines as a "partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection."[17] Republics were partnerships in all spheres of life, promoting happiness, prosperity, security, liberty and right, not of the individual alone but of the community in its entirety.

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[14] Maciver, *The Modern State*, p. 77.

[15] Ibid., p. 97.

[16] Chesters C. Maxey, *Political Philosophies*, p. 85.

Republics in ancient India also "had a definite constitutional meaning" says Dr. A. S. Altekar.[18] A Republic denoted "a form of government where the power was vested not in one person but in a 'gaṇa' or group of people. *Saṁgha* was another term used precisely in the same sense, because it was sharply distinguished from monarchy." Dr. Altekar's definition is in perfect conformity with those of the earliest definitions found in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyi or in the writings of Kātyāyana.

Concept of a republic in Pāṇini :

Pāṇini writes that the country was divided into 'Janapadas.' The derivative meaning of the term 'Janapada' points to the early state of land taking by the 'Jana' for a settled way of life. The process of first settlement of the land had completed before Pāṇini. The Janapadas which were originally named after the peoples settled in them, dropped their tribal significance and figured as territorial units and regions.[19]

The majority of these Janapadas, the original Kshatriya settlers still held sway and the political power was concentrated in their hands. The ruling Kshatriyas inhabiting the Janapadas were, as we are informed by Kātyāyana, governed by two-fold constitutions; some were monarchies and others were "Saṁghas" or republics, (*Kshatriyad-ekarājāt Saṁgha Pratishedhārtān*). Kātyāyana takes Saṁgha as a form of government distinct from Ekarāja where sovereignty vested in one (*ekādhīna*) and not in the many as in the Saṁgha (*gaṇādhīna*).[20]

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[17] Maciver, *The Modern State*, p. 83.
[18] A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 100.
[19] Dr. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 424.

Pāṇini being an eminent grammarian explains Saṁgha, not only as a political term but also as a generic term applied to various purposes. Firstly, Saṁgha means, a multitude as in the expression, *Grāmya-Pāśu-Saṁgha*=a herd of domestic cattle. In the same sense it was also applied to a multitude of human beings. Secondly, a Saṁgha was a term for a *nikāya* or body which is defined by Pāṇini as a corporate body where the distinction between the upper and lower does not exist. (*Saṁghechānauttārādharye* III.3.42). The explanation of the term Saṁgha applied to the religious Saṁghas, functioning as a fraternity without distinction of the *Uttāra*=high and *Adhara*= low.

Thirdly there is the Sūtra (*Saṁghodghau-gaṇa-prasaṁsayoh* III.3.86), which speaks of political Saṁgha technically known as *gaṇa*.[21] For whatever purpose the term may be applied, it signifies a herd, a group of men formed into a body or a people collectively governed by themselves. If this is the meaning of the term Saṁgha, a *gaṇa* "would be a state where Gaṇa or numbers ruled", or "the rule of many."[22] We find a confirmation of the opinion that *gaṇa* was "the rule of the many," in the Buddhist Canon.[23] The Buddha was asked as to how the numbers of the monks was to be made out. The Buddha prescribed that the brethren should be counted on the 'Uposatha-day' by the system employed in a *gaṇa* or by collecting voting tickets.

Meaning of Gaṇa according to the Jātakas :

The Jātakas are also eloquent about the functions of the

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[20] Ibid., p. 426.

[21] Ibid,

[22] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. IV, p. 22.

[23] *Mahavagga*, II, 18 (Translation by Rhys Davids) Oldenberg in S.B.E, Vol. XIII, p. 269.

gaṇas. From the descriptions available there, about the *'Gaṇa-Paddhati,'* we are in a position to derive at a meaning and definition also. The Jātaka (I, 422) tells us, some households combined into threes and fours, in some cases the whole quarter combined together and jointly provided for the feast of the Bhikkhus while in some cases "many people managed the entertainment by combining according to the 'Gaṇa-binding', (*Gaṇa-bandhana*). Hence the meaning of *gaṇa* becomes apparently, an assembly or an association. The word *'bandhana'* shows the artificial nature of the *gaṇa* organisation, as opposed to the tribal and primitive."[24]

The description of *gaṇa* life as referred to in Jātaka (I, 422) is confirmed by two canonical extracts, Dīgha Nikāya[25] and Aṇguttara Nikāya[26] where Buddha is said to have made his famous pronouncement about the future of a republican state. The confederacy of the 'Vajjis,' one of the republican communities of north-eastern India, is said to have been in the crisis of its fortunes. In the texts, quoted above, we are told how Ajātśatru, King of Magadha, having formed a grim resolution of attacking the territories of the Vajjians, sent messenger to the Buddha for advice. The Buddha asks his favourite disciple Ānanda whether the Vajjis still observe the seven conditions of welfare which he taught them before and being answered in the affirmative, he prophesies that so long as the Vajjis observed these conditions they may be expected not to decline but to prosper.

The condition referred to above extend over a wide range of activities of the members of the community. Ānanda tells the Master that the Vajjis assemble frequently and fully; they meet together in concord and rise in concord and carry out Vajji-business in concord; they enact nothing not already established, abrogate nothing that is already enacted and act in accordance with the ancient institutions of the Vajjians. They honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajji elders and hold it a point of duty to hearken their words....[27] From this detailed description of the Vajjis we come to know about the corporate life of these republican communities.

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[24] K. P. Jaiswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 25.

[25] *Dīgha Nikāya*, II, pp. 72–75.

[26] *Aṇguttara Nikāya*, IV, pp. 17–20.

Corporate feeling of the gaṇas :

It tells, how they carry out their business in assemblies, how they enact such laws as would not go against the will of the people as we may infer from the statement that nothing would be enacted against law already established. This leads again to the conclusion that the territory and the people occupying it, was governed jointly by the will of the entire people or an assembly thereof and not by the single will of a single head. This was called a republican community or a *gaṇa* though the description, instead of analysing the characteristics of repulican states in general, gives us a prepared list of the sources of strength as well as that of weakness of such a community, the author gives admirably comprehensive list which enlightens us about the virtues of public spirit of these gaṇa states.

The spirit of a corporate life in the society as well as polity, was the distinguishing feature of these communities which were differentiated from the monarchical states.

The concept of *Gaṇa Rājya* that prevails through the Buddhist age, thus stands equivalent to the rule of the multitude or in the alternative a state within, with a parliament as the governing body.

Concept of Gaṇa state in the Mahābhārata :

Mahābhārata, the wellknown Indian epic, presents under chapter 107 of the Śāntiparva, almost the same meaning of *gaṇa* as a political term. Though the Mahābhārata is not free from the characteristic defect common to all ancient Indian works, that is, the absence of scientific definitions of important terms; it provides us, however, with a description of the characteristic features of a *gaṇa* state enabling us to draw conclusions without difficulty.

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[27] Translation of the two canonical extracts from U. N. Ghoshal's; *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, p. 76.

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In the discourse between Yudhishthīra and Bhīṣma, in the chapter mentioned above, the Mahābhārata makes it clear that "Gaṇa refers to the whole body politic, the entire political community and in the alternative, the parliament, not to the governing body only."[28] The meaning of "entire political community" is further clarified in verse 8 which refers to the large number which composed the *gaṇa*.[29] The whole body is mentioned in verse 24.[30] These two verses indicate the positive meaning of the term *gaṇa*. We also get a clear indication that a close body is not a *gaṇa* in verse 23, which describes the authorities through whom power should be weilded.[31]

The *gaṇa* is not the governing-body which is composed of the chosen few and not of the people. The *gaṇa-Mukhyas* and Pradhānas, (chiefs and Prādhanas) whose jurisdiction it was to conduct affairs of the community, were included in it.

Formation of confederations :

It is thus apparent that a close body was not meant by *gaṇa*. Verse 11 to 15 enlighten us about another political advancement of the epic age. The verses tell us that these self-governing *gaṇa*-states formed into confederacies. The reason is obvious. The *gaṇas* were small states, often failing to accumulate that military strength which was needed to resist an imperialist power. Secondly, there was a constant possibility of an inner dissension. And lastly, as verse no. 15 says, membership of a confederacy was desirable because material prosperity was won by the prowess of the confederated army. Often

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[28] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 103.

[29] *Mahābhārata* Ch. 107 (Poona Ed. Ch. 108), Shāntiparva,

मेदमूलो विनाशो हि गणानामुपलक्षये ।
मन्नसंवरणां दुःखं बहूनामिति मे मतिः ॥ Sl. 8.

[30] Ibid., मन्त्रगुप्तिः प्रधानेषु चारश्चमित्न-कर्षण ।
न गणाः कृत्स्नशो मन्त्र श्रोतुमर्हन्ति भारत । Sl. 24.

[31] Ibid., तस्मान्मानयितव्यान्ते, गणमुख्याः प्रधानतः ।
लोकयात्रा समायत्ता भूयसी तेषु पार्थिव ॥ Sl. 23.

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outsiders sought the alliance of confederate entities for this reason alone.

A constitutional survey of the Hindu republics brings forth a character which stands as a peculiarity of the Indian republics. Sometimes an observer might take this peculiarity as a departure from the concept of republicanism. That is, the limitations distinctly laid upon the authority of the people.

Classification of republics :

Pāṇini has classified republics on the basis of various principles which we shall examine in the following chapter. According to the first principle, a particular class of families was entitled to govern the state on behalf of the entire people. In some of the gaṇas the members of the governing class were awarded the title 'Rājā' and were allowed to enjoy some superior powers than the ordinary members of the gaṇa. It implies that the principles of equality and liberty which form the fundamental basis of a republic were found in a different form in the republican states of ancient India.

There are examples of republics which were organised on the basis of 'Varṇas.' Thus there are *Kshatriya-Saṁghas, Brāhmaṇa-Saṁghas* and also *Śūdra-Saṁghas*. In all these *gaṇas* the Kshatriyas, Brāhmaṇas and Śūdras were given prominence in their respective organisations.

These examples apparently seem to be the examples of aristocratic states because the right of participation in the affairs of the state and government is given to a limited number of people of distinguished classes of citizens. In the discussion of the constitutional practices in the 'Sabhāparva' of Mahābhārata a reference of this feature of Saṁgha polity is found. Sāvitriputras were such a small community, referred to by Pāṇini, among the new republics of the 'Vāhīka, countries, of the north west of India.[32] It is said that only one hundred families organised themselves as a Kshatriya community with the title Rājā to each of them.

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[32] V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 430. Also *The Mahābhārata*, Karṇaparva, V. 49.

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Another instance of such a Kshatriya community is cited in the stories of Jātaka. In the capital of 'Cheta state' mention is made of 60,000 'Kshatriyas', all of whom were styled as Rājās. These 60,000 men must have represented so many Kshatriya members, constituting that state.[33] The traditional number of 7,707 kings comprising the ruling body in the case of the Lichavis has been carefully preserved in Pāli literature.

From the large number of 'Rājās' and Kshatriyas ruling over the masses, we can well imagine that it was an aristocratic state, yet the aristocratic body that dealt in the political matters was more or less numerous to the extent that each family had one representative in the governing body. The remaining bulk of the society recognised the authority of this representative body by showing their loyalty to the state. Pāṇini takes "Bhakti" to denote loyalty of the citizens to the state whether a kingdom or a republic.

Nature of Hindu political concepts :

The rights of the individual do not figure prominently in the Hindu political ideas. The individual and the state do not pose as two separate entities, antagonistic to each other. Hindu political thought does not fall under any of the accepted categories of western speculation. It stands by itself. In their fundamental assumptions, Hindu writters come somewhat near the idealism which we associate with the Greeks which found a resurrection in Rousseau, to form the idealistic philosophy in Germany and England. No individuality is to be fenced round against the impact of social forces. Society is not a mere conglomeration of men and women. It is a working conception of life.

The Greek city state, which emerged out of the Homeric tradition of Supreme Kings, revered among the folk, "was ingrained in the new spirit of life, a remarkable order of society. This spirit and the new order of society have a peculiar resemblance with the sentiment of the ancient Hindu Republics.

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[33] Jātaka, VI. 511.

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Before the claims of the city, all other human relations took a secondary place. Kinship, the strongest social bond of primitive life, lost its pre-eminence and found its chief recognition as admitting to a condition more highly prized, that of citizenship.... No priest by order reinforced among them that sense of subjection to authority which their kings had failed to maintain.... A people so minded, were prepared for the great social and political experiment.... for which the environment had particularly been set. In fact, the family, once a community is transferred into an association, and the city now appears as the essential community, is only a part of it and nothing more. Men gain the sense of belonging to the city as a whole. Men become in a new sense, 'citizens.' They identify civilisation itself with this process of incorporation into the city. Detached from the 'natural' environment where immobility and tradition strengthen each other, they are free to make for themselves a new unity and a new life.[34]

This concept of a 'new unity' is in tune with the modern organic view of state. And the Jain texts speak almost in the same strain.

Concept of a corporate life in the Jain texts:

"A Jain text in explaining *gaṇa* says that with reference to human society, *gaṇa* is a group with the main characteristic of 'possessing a mind' of being conscious. The constitutional *gaṇa* is the real *gaṇa* and in the eye of the Jain authority, it has a mind; it is an organized conscious body of men like the political assembly of the Mallas or the assembly of the corporate Paura. It is a corporate assembly, as opposed to a mere multitude or chance collection."[35] In the Avadāna Śataka it is further clarified that Gaṇa rule is opposed to royal rule, with the help of the oft-quoted incident of the merchants from the middle country (or northern India) visiting the Deccan in the time of the Buddha. They were asked by the king of the Deccan, "Gentlemen, merchants, who is the king there in northern India ?" The merchants replied, "Some countries are under *gaṇas* and some are under kings."[36] Thus the royal form of government is contrasted with the *gaṇa* form.

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[34] Maciver, *The Modern State*, Ch. III, pp. 70–73.

[35] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. IV, pp. 26-27.

The basis of the monarchical form of government is hereditary right of a single royal family or a single royal authority while the non-monarchical form of state is based on the principle of collective authority, directly exercised by the entire community or through a smaller group of persons, recommended or chosen by the people. In Rome we have seen, franchise was confined to a strictly limited aristocracy which itself was dominated by small oligarchy. In the medieval republics we find the same state of affairs after the closing of the Council. Seven States of Netherlands have been recognised as a republic. This republic was governed no doubt by an elected state holder but he was raised to that position by the votes of a very small body of Burghers who only had the franchise.

According to the basic principle of a non-monarchical state given above, Rome, Medieval Republics or the Netherlands, are instances of states aristocratic or oligarchic in form but republican in spirit. Even in our own times in the U.S.A. millions of Negroes had no franchise for a long time. England had a number of pocket-boroughs till the middle of nineteenth century. Yet these states are classed as amongst the major democracies of the modern world. With this theoretical background and historical evidence we may conclude that our age has recognized that as a republic where the sovereign power vests not in a single person, as in monarchy, but in a representative body of the selected few, recommended and recognized by the public opinion in general.

Changes in political outlooks of ancient Greece :

A change in the political concepts and the corresponding institutions was perceptible in Greece during the late sixth and seventh century. During the growing social unrest, the distinctive character of the Athenian state was the diffusion of political power. Rights were being extended to the lower classes of the population, who were denied these privileges before. Offices were enlarged. The fourth class of the city was given admission into the popular assembly, on the other hand the old aristocratic council was transformed by a system of recruitment from ex-magistrates and at the same time its supreme authority over administrative and legislative matters were being limited. On the whole the city states were undergoing a process of expansion towards larger democracies with more of liberalism and large heartedness towards the average and ordinary citizen. Suddenly, the extraordinarily bold reformers swept away the old tribes and confounded the brotherhoods and kindreds. King-grouping was broken up, which was the centre of resistance to democratization. A new council was established of five hundred on the basis of new tribes. Behind it remained the assembly of the folk which must ratify every decision of the council ere it became effective in law. But more remarkable was the establishment of a system of popular courts of justice which gave all citizens of every class the chance of serving in the role of judges, the panel being selected on each occasion by lot. Thus for the first time in the history of the West the political interest overcame the natural grouping of family and tribe of race and nation.

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[36] Ibid., p. 26.

Changes in the political outlook during the time of the Buddha :

Similar changes towards democracy were marked in the eastern horizon during the time of the Buddha. Mahābhārata confirms the state of affairs, that the members of a *gaṇa* were equals of one another in respect of birth and family. The Mahābhārata offers ready material to Dr. V. S. Agrawala to prove that the constituent groups of a *gaṇa* state were conscious of the principle of equality which formed the basis of non-monarchical political organizations.[37] The difference between the *gaṇas* of ancient India and the city-republics of Greece is not in principles but in the forms of states.

Different bases of forming gaṇas in ancient India :

Hindu republics were formed on different bases and,

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[37] V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 429.

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therefore, we come across different types of republics. But the singleness of purpose of all the different types puts all of them under the category of non-monarchical form of state. Members or groups of people in each republican state were again brought under one government due to one single purpose. It would either be a social, economic or political purpose. The feeling of equality prevailed within the republics due to this oneness of purpose.

Pāṇini refers to a number of *Saṁghas as Āyudhajīvin*,[38] meaning those people who lived by the profession of arms. The Āyudhajivins had united together because they took to a common profession. The constituent groups, therefore, enjoyed the same status and same rights. Kautilya refers to the same people as *"Āyudhajīvi-kshatriyādi-prachurāh"*, those mostly comprising of the soldiers and the other was "Sreṇi-*prāyah*" comprising of guilds of craftsmen, traders and agriculturists. The word *sreṇi* was of political significance. The trading classes were not co-opted in the governing body of upper *varṇa* republics yet they were not deprived of the right of political activity within their own jurisdiction.

There was a constant move towards reclaiming all those left over, within the Aryan fold by the performance of some easy rituals called *Vrātya-stoma*, to put an end to their stigma and to entitle them to social intercourse. "It is possible", writes Dr. V. S. Agrawala, "that the converted *Vrātyas* who had been admitted to the Brāhmaṇa or Kshatriya fold were spoken of as *Brahman-kritāha* and *Kshatriya-kritāha* etc. This indicates a vigorous attempt to absorb in the Hindu society, elements that were at one time outside the Aryan pail." Some of the words in the Aṣṭādhyāi obviously prove that this type of movement was in brisk operation in the society. Not only this, Pāṇini definitely observes that there were gaṇas of mixed population, all of which enjoyed equal rights. The great Mālavaṣ, whose chequered history can be read from the days of Pāṇini up to the time of the foreign invasion on the Sindh and north western regions, had developed into a cosmopolitan republic. The rapid movement towards the extension of civic and political rights to all and the tendency to include all classes of people, is visible in the Mālavan republic. It is stated that near about fourth century A.D. Mālavas certainly admitted Brahamins and men of other castes to live in their territory and to exercise their franchise. This liberalism is certainly not a characteristic of an oligarchy.[39]

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[38] Pāṇini, Sutras V. 3. 114–117.

The concept of republicanism was not only developing and enlarging, but the spirit was penetrating through almost the core of Indian life. Its all pervasiveness was noticed in the religious *saṁghas* of the time of the Buddha, in the industrial and professional guilds of traders, weavers, agriculturists, peasants and other servicemen.[40] The spirit of self-government made the citizens of the republics, all the more united and consolidated. Consolidation in its own turn brought thoroughness and confidence in the people.

The *gaṇas* of the fourth century B.C. had a hard time during the Greek conquest of the borderland. These republican states, as Megasthenes and Arrian have reported, were keen to preserve their independence and in doing so they had to put up strong resistance to the Greek imperialist forces. Their peformance on the battlefields have been highly commended in the Greek historical accounts. When the *Yavana* power declined they transferred their allegiance to the emperors of the easterners. Probably, timely submission saved them from annihilation and gave them a lease of life on conditions of submission and military aid. Their value, however, was understood by the empire-builders of the fourth century and specially Kautilya, the political authority, whose main contribution to the age was his kingly-science. Though his main political interest was monarchical state, yet he makes a mention of the *gaṇas,* which needs serious attention because it has been made by a supporter of imperialistic policy. He goes so far as to extol the value of republican aid to a conqueror aspiring after universal domination. In his eyes, their help was superior in value to the gain of an army or an ally and he calls upon the conqueror to secure the services of these corporations. In short, his policy was similar to that pursued by the kings of medieval France towards the republican cantons of Switzerland.

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[39] N. C. Banerjee, *Hindu Polity and Political Theories,* Pt. II, p. 121.

[40] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India,* p. 203.

Republican trends penetrated through Indian social life:

Unlike Greece the concept of republicanism developed not only within the sphere of administrative and legislative organs but Buddhist period and post Buddhist period saw it enveloping the religious as well as the every day life of a rural citizen. The Buddha, by a happy coincidence, was born in the famous republic of the Sākyas and lived under republican institutions of a very high order. The Buddha himself was an embodiment of the democratic ideals. When he established the Buddhist *saṁgha,* he adopted naturally, the main principles of the life of a republican state. Professor D. R. Bhandarkar[41] has supported the view and laid some stress on the argument originally advanced by Dr. Jayaswal that as the Buddha never stopped to explain the technical terms like *'Jñāpti'*, *'Pratijñā'*, etc., and used them in his own *Saṁgha* procedure, they must be held to have been already current and fairly known in his time.

Dr. Majumdar's opinion is: "The procedure of Buddhist Church was based on the procedure of the political *saṁgha,* but it had its own original features also."[42] The Buddhist *saṁgha* was a brotherhood of the Bhikkus without any class or caste distinction. Equality in absolute sense predominated the Buddhist Saṁgha while the political Saṁgha was mostly organized on class basis.

4113

But the procedure followed in the Buddhist assemblies were almost indispensable for assemblies in every other sphere of life. Thus when we read in Chulla-Vagga[43] how a matter could be referred to by the assembly to a committee, we may be almost sure that the well-known modern system of expediting

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[41] D. R. Bhandarkar, Carmichael Lecture Series I, p. 184.

[42] R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, p. 240.

[43] *Chulla-Vagga,* IV, 14, 19ff.

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business by referring complicated questions to committees was not unknown to the ancient Indian assemblies whether they were religious or political. Further details about the definite rules regarding the form of moving resolutions in the assembly,[44] of the Buddhist Saṁgha shows, how advanced ideas of corporate activities prevailed in the Buddhist society. People were almost acclimatized in the democratic air of life. Buddhist texts thus establish the fact that some states in ancient India possessed democratic forms of government, the most notable feature of which was the supreme popular assembly that regularly held its sittings in the *'Santhāgāra'* in the capital city.

We ought not, therefore, hesitate to accept the view that democratic ideals had far-fetched influence over life. It would not be an exaggeration to believe the Greek authors say that most of the cities at the end of the fourth century B.C. when the great Maurya Empire was in the making, adopted the democratic form of government, though some retained the kingly until the invasion of the country by Alexander.[45]

Republican trends in rural life :

Besides the political and religious spheres, republican trends had gained roots in every day life of man. The marks of this are noticeable in the corporate way of living. When we turn our eyes towards the villages we find the inhabitants enjoying land, pastures and cattle collectively.[46] Sometimes the house holders of the village owned cattle severally but no one had separate pasture. Naturally, the village families had to hear collectively the responsibility of maintaining the cattle. After the crop was cut the cattle roamed over the fields. When the crops were growing, they were sent all together under the charge of a herdsman, hired by the village collectively to the village grazing land beyond the fields.

No individual or corporate proprietor needed to fence his portions of the fields. There was a common fence and the whole field, with its rows of boundaries which were also the water channels, bore the appearance of the patched robe of a member of the Buddhist order. This interesting description of the system of land holding is important, still more important is the remark of Prof. Rhys Davids that, "fields were divided into plots corresponding in number to that of the heads of houses in villages and each family took the produce of its share. But there was no such proprietory right, as against the community as we are accustomed to in England."[47] Neither had any individual the right of bequest, even to the extent of deciding the shares of his own family. All such matters were settled by custom, by the general sense of the community as to what was right and proper. And the general sense did not recognise the right of primo-geniture. Women had their personal property. No individual could acquire, either by purchase or inheritance any exclusive right in any portion of the common grass-land.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, translated by McCrindle, p. 37.

[46] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 28-29.

Republican trends in rural administration :

The same trend of a community life prevailed in the village administration also. All government business was carried on through the village headman and Prof. Rhys Davids writes with confidence: "It is almost certain that in earlier times, the appointment was either hereditary or conferred by the village council itself."[48]

The villagers are described as uniting of their own accord to build mote-halls and rest houses and reservoirs between their own and adjacent villages and it is interesting to find that women are proud to bear a part in such works of public utility.

These villages had achieved perfect democratic environment in the economic sphere also. The corporate life had brought uniformity in economic progress. Economic system in villages was simple. None of the house-holders could have

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[47] Ibid., p. 29.

[48] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 30.

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been what would now be called rich. On the other hand there was an adequacy of supply for their simple needs. There was security and there was independence. There were no landlords and paupers. Prof. Rhys Davids' estimate of this position of the people is of about some seventy or eighty per cent of the population which lived under such economic conditions. "The people of India then, much more than even now, were first and foremost village folk. They occupied a social grade quite different from and far above our village fold......" writes Prof. Davids. They were proud of their standing, their family and their village. And they were governed by headmen of their own class and village, very probably selected by themselves, in accordance with their own customs and ideals. Democracy, in short, was more direct and real with them than it is with us today.

Other experiments in the sphere of non-monarchical constitutions:

A closer study of the period reveals facts which throw light upon certain new constitutions which fall between the *gaṇa* and *kula,* the two main divisions of the *saṁgha* states. *Gaṇa* states were ruled by the assemblies formed of the representatives of people in general and *Kulas* were the states formed on the *Kula* basis. The newer forms of states do not fall under either of the two categories but they can, in no case, be classed among the hereditary monarchies. They are for certain non-monarchical states and their forms of government are slightly different though the methods of selection or election of the heads of the government are also different from the usual method followed in the prominent republics.

Bhaujya constitution :

'Bhaujya' constitution is the first of these newer experiments. This constitution was first noticed in the Aitareya-Brāhmana.[49] Ashoka in his edicts equates *Bhoja* with *Rathika* or *Rāshtrika*. Dr. Jayaswal's conclusion is, "the *Rāshtrikas* and *Bhojakas* or

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[49] *Aitareya Brāhmana,* VII, 14. (दक्षिणास्यां दिशि थे के च सत्वतां राजानी भौज्याचैव ते भिषिच्यन्ते भोजेन्ये नानभिषि-त्काना चक्षतः) ।।

Bhojas apparently meant the non-hereditary leadership."[50] 'Sapateyyam' leadership for the Bhojas suggests that in each case there were more than one leader. Khāravela inscription describes the *'Rāshtrikas'* and the *'Bhojakas'* as collective bodies with paraphernalia of sovereignty.[51] The constitution itself was called Bhaujya as in Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. In later records the *Bhojas* are referred to as a subdivision of the *'Yādavās'*. Earlier, the *Yādavās* were an important group of the league of two republics called the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis. This constitution, in all probability, prevailed in eastern India. It is so presumed because the reference to this constitution is found in the Pāli Canon, which as a rule does not deal with institutions of Western India.

The Svarājya constitution :

Svarājya is the second type of constitution mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa prevailing in Western India.[52] According to the description given in the Aitareya Brāhamaṇa, the chief of the *Svarājya* constitution is a 'self-ruler' or *'Svarāt'*. The rulers of this constitution can also be called the president of the state because he attains this office by his own merit and not by hereditary right. A wise man, *'Vidvān'*, sacrifices by the *Vājpeya* and he obtains *Svarājya* which is almost like becoming the leader of equals. Indra is given as the first example who attained *Svarājya*, by performing the *Svarājya* consecration (*Abhisheka*) and proving his own merit. It implies that there was a method of selection from amongst the equals and citizens enjoyed equality in *gaṇas* alone, for *Mahābhārata* considered the members of a *gaṇa* to be equals (*Sadriśas-Sarve*). According to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa this form of government prevailed among the *'Nīchyas'* and the *'Apāchyas'* of Western India.

Vairājya constitution :

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa enlightens us about another type of

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[50] Rock Series Proclamations V & VIII, quoted by Dr. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, p. 75.

[51] Jayaswal, K.P. "Hāthigumpha inscriptions" J.B.O.R.S. III, p. 455.

[52] Jayaswal, K. P. *Hindu Polity*, p. 76.

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constitution called Vairājya, which is an example of a government dominated by republican spirit. The Aitareya Brāhamaṇa describes it as a national constitution of some of the nations of the north.

Dr. Jayaswal has rendered the term, taking it literally as the 'kingless-constitution'. He says that the context in which the term *'Vairājya'* has been used is the *'Janapadāh'*, the people, in opposition to the king mentioned as *'Abhishikta'* i.e. anointed. According to the 'Brāhamaṇa' the whole country or nation (*Janapadāh*) took the consecretion of rulership. Hence we cannot doubt that this was a real democratic constitution.

We see Kautilya mentioning this form of constitution in his Arthaśhāstra. Kautilya treats it as a form of government and rejects it as a bad form. He did so because, like his contemporary Greek thinkers, he held democracy in contempt. He writes that no body feels in a *Vairājya* government the feeling of 'mine' with regard to the state; the aim of political organism is rejected; anyone can sell away (the country), no one feels responsible, or one becoming indifferent leaves the state.[53]

The Jaina Ācharaṅga Sūtra also mentions *Vairājya* amongst different kinds of constitutions.[54]

Rashtrikas and Pettanikas :

Rashtrikās of the West who have a special mention in Ashoka's inscriptions, in the group of the *Bhojas* and *Pettanikas,* were a non-monarchical community. "No king is mentioned by Ashoka. Khāravela also mentions them in the plural, fighting in league with the *Bhojakas*. Details of their administration are not available but it is known for certain, from the above evidences that the basic principles of the organization was republican. For the Aṇguttāra-Nikāya hints at the Rāshtrika-Sāpatya or board of leaders which was not hereditary. They were, therefore, elected."[55] The 'Pettanikas' by the side of the

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[53] *Arthaśāstra,* VIII. 2. p. 353 of translation by Shama Shastry.

[54] *Āyāranga Suttam,* p. 83. 'Verājjāni', (Jacobi's Edition).

[55] Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 80.

Rāshtrikas, mentioned in the Pāli canon, make them conspicuous because the rulers or leaders had managed to become hereditary.

Dvairājya constitution :

This constitution is an example by itself, which does not fall either under the category of monarchies or under the republics. Kautilya characterises it as the rule of two,[56] which is neither a monarchy nor an aristocracy. A parallel example of a system of two councils ruling over the same city is found in the Greek city state of Sparta. Rome too had a system of two consuls for sometime. But the mode of their appointment in neither of the cases was like that in a monarchy. They were exercising mutual control upon each other. It was thus a new experimentation of limited executive authority. Though it may not be called a pure form of republic, it is merely a deviation from hereditary monarchy, based on republican trends prevalent in the society.

Arājaka constitution :

Among the examples of non-monarchical states, *'Arājaka'* is the most interesting one. Usually it is confused with 'anarchy' which means lawless condition of life. But *'Arājaka'* constitution is better translated by the word non-ruler' state. The ideal of this constitution was that of the impersonal rule. Law was to be taken as the ruler and there should be total abnegation of human authority. Dr. Jayaswal calls this "an extreme democracy almost Tolstoian in ideal."[57]

The Mahābhārata explains this ideal condition of political life in these words: "In the beginning of the current cycle, there was no monarchy and no monarch, and there was no man appointed to execute government. In fact, there was no executive power. The rule of law and government of law was established. This government of law did not last for want of mutual confidence. Hence monarchy was introduced."[58] At another place in Śāntiparva itself, the same theory is expressed in different language : "Subjects in the *Arājaka* state becoming anarchical formed resolutions in an assembly and made laws for control of violence and crime. All the castes for the sake of confidence entered into agreement to live by the contract. But when they were not satisfied with the working of the system they explained to the Creator, who recommended them a sovereign and a king was elected."[59] The Jaina Sūtra, 'Āyārangasuttam'[60] confirms that this non-ruler constitution was an experiment which had been tried more than once in this country. The *Sūtra* mentions that the form was a living institution.

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[56] *Arthaśāstra,* VIII. 2. p. 353 of translation by Shama Shastry.

[57] Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 83.

[58] *Mahābhārata* Śānti Parva Ch. LIX. Sl. 13–17.

Abhiśheka essential in every constitution :

There are references to rulerships also but the remarkable thing about them is the importance of the ceremony of consecration. Without that there was no legal state. The rulers had to take the oath of good and honest government. The ceremony was so important that even the republics, where the whole people rules themselves, the entire country was supposed to take *'abhiśeka'*, consecration by a special ritual.[61] The Licchavis had their *'abhiśeka'* and the Mallas had their fixed place where their rulers in taking office, went through 'coronation' (*mukutabandhana*). Unanointed ruler is a term of contempt in Hindu politics. It is to denote an 'unlawful ruler.' Thus we see, the effect of the all-pervading republican spirit, spreading over a long period, over several types of governments.

Causes of the decline of republics :

Various types of republics and non-ruler states flourished in north-western region for a considerably long period of Indian history. At the beginning of the Mauryan period, the whole of the northern India was studded with these republican states.

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[59] Ibid., Ch. LXVII. Sl. 4, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

[60] *Āyārangasuttam* II. 3—1—10. (Jacobi's Ed.).

[61] *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 14.

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They possessed considerable power and caused enough inconvenience for the growing empires.

The onward march of imperialism was, however, destined to make clean sweep of almost all the centres of republican institutions and corporate political activities and the way was paved by the Machiavallian minister of the founder of the Great Mauryan Empire. The existence of independent democratic states seemed incompatible with his conception of Empire and the great minister set himself to the task of undermining their power by means fair or foul.

Revival of republicanism :

With the downfall of the strong centralized government established by the prowess of independent political leaders corporations reared up their heads again and some of them attained the highest pitch of greatness and glory. Numismatic evidences prove that the Yaudheyas, the Mālvas, the Vṛṣṇis, the Arjunāyanas, the Audhambaras and the Kuṇindas had established their independence during the century that followed the overthrow of the Mauryan Empire. These new republics played the role of the Licchavis, the Vrijikas, the Kurus and the Pañchālas. So, true is it that the individual dies but the spirit survives. There is no doubt that in spite of the successive foreign invasions and the establishment of the 'Kushāṇa Empire', a large number of indigenous states flourished in North India during the long period of more than four centuries, from *c.* 100 B.C. to 300 A.D., that elapsed between the decline of the first and the rise of the second Magadha Empire.

Almost the same were the causes of the disappearance of the ancient republics of Greece and Rome. The internal problem first loomed large. Dissatisfaction of the slaves, of the dispossessed and the small cultivators swelled up and caused deep-seated economic and social disorders. The wars of Rome left its soldiers without civil prospects, they became professional organizers of wars. Thus the 'general will' that had expressed itself in the pride and loyalty of citizenship was dethroned and broken by the capricious will of the soldiery. It was this process that made the Roman Empire, the enlarged city-state of Greece, the hollow shell of power, at length unable to resist the pressure of outer forces. And thus feudalism overpowered republicanism, which, however, revived in the idealism of Russeau.

Similarly, the power of Gupta Empire struck the republican system in Rajputana. By the middle of fourth century A.D. republics disappeared from Hindu India. The old Licchavis quit the political scene, a branch migrating into Nepal. The following century saw the final exit of Hindu constitutionalism from the stage of history. "All that was good, came down from the age of Vedic-fore-fathers, all that progress which had been achieved since the composition of the first 'Rik', all that gave life to the mechanism of state, bade good bye to the land. Republicanism was the first to begin the 'Great Departure' to lead the dirge of political Nirvāṇa."[62]

A glorious chapter of the political history of ancient India closes here but it leaves a message for posterity, that India knew both the forms of states, monarchical and non-monarchical, that there were methods of exercising political rights directly and indirectly, by the people. Even in monarchical states, people were active citizens and not passive subjects. They knew and had experienced the spirit of the terms, 'right' and 'liberty.' They had also known the method of harmonizing liberty with law and authority. The ideals of the republican institutions have revived again in this very land after nineteen hundred years' hazardous march through light and darkness.

The reorientation of the ancient ideal is a reality today under changed circumstances. But we should be aware of the causes of decline of the republics, mentioned in the Mahābhārata. The republic can prosper and perpetuate if only it is saved from internal dissension caused by jealousy, mistrust and greed.

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[62] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 158.

CHAPTER II

EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE REPUBLICS

Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyi :

The account of the States with non-kingly type of government forms an important chapter in the constitutional history of India. In the post-Vedic times we notice a distinct departure from the traditions of monarchical rule. The existence of republican form of government during the post-Vedic period is proved by a number of testimonies. The earliest in point of time is Pāṇini's celebrated treatise on grammar which contains clear traces of political corporations.[1] For the political history of the post-Vedic age, Pāṇini's work may be regarded as a valuable source. Dr. V. S. Agrawala's aruguments[2] leave no room for doubt about the authenticity of the informations obtained from Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyi. It is a mine of trustworthy informations, throwing light upon numerous institutions.

Pāṇini's birth-place[3] lay a few miles to the north of the confluence of the Kabul with the Indus river. The Daksha Gotra, in which this celebrated grammarian was born, is referred to as a clan organized into a *saṁgha*. Therefore, Pāṇini was conveniently placed in a situation from where he could give the first hand information about a self-governing people. Pāṇini has analysed the methods of naming places during his time. While showing various ways of naming, he mentions that, places were also named after the nature of their polity. Thus he divides *Janapadas* in two classes, viz., 'Ekarājās' and 'Saṁghas'.[4] Again, the Sūtra *'Sanghe-Chānauttarādharaye'*, shows that the nature of a corporation was fully understood in those days. Corporation is sharply distinguished from mere collection of groups of people.

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1. R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, Ch. III. p. 221.
2. V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, Ch. I. p. 1.
3. Sūtras, IV. 3. 100 *Pāṇini*.
4. Ibid,

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It clearly indicated that a political *saṁgha* was a definite organization bound by certain laws and regulations.

Pāṇini makes clear reference to two types of states the first is to the monarchical state as 'Rājya' derived from the word 'Rājan' or king as distinguished from *saṁgha* or Republic. "When Pāṇini has occasion to mention individual *saṁghas,* he names communities which are known from monumental and other evidence, to have been republican. In his time *saṁghas* denoted *gaṇa* and the religious *saṁgha* does not appear to have come into prominence. In fact we shall see, the latter republican bodies are called by Kautilya 'Saṁghas'. There is thus not much room to doubt that *saṁgha* originally meant a Republic".[5] The distinction between the two types of states have been made by Pāṇini on the basis of the number of rulers wielding the political authority over the state. *Saṁgha* or the republican state is distinct from 'Ekarāja' or monarchy, where the sovereign authority is vested in an individual.

Pāṇini has also given the generic sense in which the term *saṁgha* was used in his days.[6] Firstly he says that *saṁgha* meant 'a multitude', 'a herd of domestic cattle'. In the same sense, it could also be applied to a multitude of human beings. Secondly a *saṁgha* was a term for a 'Nikāya' which is defined by Pāṇini as a corporate body where the distinction of the upper and the lower does not exist. This fraternity developed in the religious *saṁghas.* The last and the most important meaning is that which is conveyed by the Sūtra, *'Saṁghodghan-gaṇa-prasamsayoh'.*[7] It clearly points towards the political *saṁghas* technically known as *'gaṇa'.* Thus we may conclude that Pāṇini used *saṁgha* and *gaṇa* as synonymous words for a republic.

Republics named by Pāṇini :

Paṇini mentioned *saṁghas* or republics by name:[8] (1) the Vṛika and (2) the Dāmani. These two were the two impor-

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[5] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. IV. p. 23.

[6] V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini,* Ch. VII. p. 426.

[7] Pāṇini, Sūtra III, 3. 86.

[8] V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini,* Ch. VII. p. 436.

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tant *Āyudhajīvi Gaṇas*. There is a mention of some six *gaṇas* which federated together to be called *'Trigarta-shashṭha'* or the league of the six Trigartas: (a) the *Kaundopartha,* (b) the *Dāndaki,* (c) the *Kaushtaki,* (d) the *Jālamāni,* (e) the *Brāhmagupta* and (f) the *Jānaki or Jālaki.* Pāṇini also refers to the other Āyudhajīvi states and the Parśva states.

Pāṇini describes the political organization of these republican states and also the impact of the republican trends upon the society. We shall consider Pāṇini's description of the republics in the following chapter.

The republican trends in the political sphere of life dominated in a number of states even during the origin and growth of the two great religions, Buddhism and Jainism. The writers of the oldest Buddhist text *Vinaya Pitaka* and the *Jātaka* stories, did not fail to notice the brilliant working of the institutions of the republican states.

Republics in the Buddhist and Jain literature :

Our next important source of information is the Buddhist and Jain literature. It supplies us with numerous evidences of the existence of non-monarchical states, where the sovereign authority was not vested in the hands of one; we might accept the view of Pāṇini that they were *'Gaṇādhīna' rājya,* where the will of the people was sovereign. A very clear statement about the existence of non-monarchical states along with monarchies is found in the *Avadānśataka.* A few merchants from mid-India (*Madhya Desha*) visited the Deccan and being asked about the form of government in their country, replied, "Some provinces are under kings while others are ruled by *Gaṇas*" (*Kechitdeśāh rājādhīnāh kechit gaṇādhīnā*). The Jaina *Āyāranga-Sutta* an earlier text, also refers to *'Gaṇa Rāja'*, a territory where the *gaṇa* is the ruling authority. A more specific reference about the existence of *'Gaṇa-rājyas'*, side by side with monarchical states, is found in the *'Bhagwati-Sūtra'*.[9] It says that king Ajātaśatru conquered a unique confederacy composed of kingdoms and republics in ancient India across the Ganges. The *Sūtra* furnishes us with some details about the constituent units of this unique confederacy. Kāsi and Kośala were the two kingdoms, there were eighteen other *gaṇarājyas,* nine Mallaki states and nine Licchavi states. Out of the component parts of the confederacy, besides the eighteen *gaṇarājyas* clearly mentioned, the Licchavis were for certain, following the republican trends. The Buddhist canons, the *Jātakas* and the *Aṭṭhakathā,*[10] a later Buddhist document, distinctly refer to the prosperous Licchavis and the characteristics of their republican constitution.

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[9] *Bhagawati Sūtra,* 300.

Republics recorded in Buddhist literature :

Numerous republics are recorded in the Buddhist literature. The *Śākyas* are at the apex, amongst whom the Buddha was born. "They covered the land to the east of the kingdoms of Kośala and Kauśambi and to the west of Aṇga, from the districts of Gorakhpur and Ballia to the district of Bhagalpur to the north of Magadha and the south of the Himalayas".[11] The great Buddha was thus an apostle of democracy; he adopted democratic ideas in his system of the monastic government and himself taught the *'Vajjians'* the conditions under which they would prosper.

Buddha's age was the age of glory for Indian republics. They reached the zenith of their prosperity, the evidence of which is amply found in the *Jātakas.* The introductory episodes of the *Jātaka* stories furnish some informations regarding the constitution of the Licchavis. The *Ekapanna Jātaka*[12] describes the capital of the *Licchavis,* the prosperous city of *Vaiśāli.* The *Chullakaliṇga-Jātaka*[13] gives additional details. It corroborates the informations furnished by the *Ekapanna Jātaka.* The descriptions thus obtained help us in proving that definite republican trends prevailed among the *Licchavis.* Th *Bhadda-*

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[10] Aṭṭhakathā, Rhys Davids has called it as a later Buddhist Document.

[11] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VI. p. 42,

[12] *Ekapanna Jātaka,* No. 149. 1. 504.

[13] *Chullakaliṇga-Jātaka,* No. 301. III. I,

Śāla-Jātaka[14] refers to the tank in the *Vaiśāli* city where the families of the kings got water for the ceremonial sprinkling. We are told that by the tank was set a strong guard within and without and not even a bird could find room to get through. The same *Jātaka* relates the story how the Commander-in-Chief of *Kośala* violated the sacredness of the tank by bathing his wife in it and was pursued by five hundred angry *Licchavi* kings.

We cannot dismiss the whole story as a mere popular myth. "Though we need not attach much importance to the concrete figures which they supply, the general system described by them may be accepted as not much divergent from actual state of affairs."[15] The number of kings of *Vaiśāli* given as seven thousand seven hundred and seven may be dismissed as a conventional figure but the above story and the conventional figure are enough evidence of the fact that the supreme assembly of the state consisted of a pretty large number of members and must, as such, be held to be a popular one.

Besides the *Licchavis,* the Buddhist literature refers to: (a) the great *Śākyas* with their capital at *Kapilavastu,* (b) the *Koliyas of Rāmagrāma,* (c) the *Videhas* with their capital at *Mithilā,* (the *Videhas* and *Licchavis* conjointly are called *Vajjis* or *Vṛijis*), (d) the *Mallas,* who covered a large area to the south of the *Śākyas,* divided into two units with their capitals at *Kuśinagara* (*Kuśinārā*) and at *Pāvā,* (e) the *Moriyas* of *Pippalivana* and (f) the *Bulis of Allakappa,* who were minor communities, (g) the *Bhaggas* (*Bhargas*) who were neighbours of the kingdom of the *Vatsas of Kauśambi.*

The *Vṛijis* and the *Mallas* have been noticed by Kautilya and have also been referred to by Pāṇini. Detailed descriptions of the republican states, other than the few important ones are not available. Writers of the age of the commentators did not take special care to describe them because they belonged probably to the same type and were governed almost by the same republican principles. Buddhist texts clearly establish the fact

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[14] *Bhadda-Śāla-Jātaka,* No. 465. IV. 149.

[15] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* Ch. III. p. 226.

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that some states in ancient India were of republican form, the most notable feature of which was that the supreme popular assembly regularly held its sittings in the *'Santhāgāra'* in the capital city. It has already been said that the Buddha introduced the same principles in his monastic system. Hence, Dr. K. P. Jayaswal thinks that the procedure followed at the deliberations of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was identical with that of its parent body, the political *saṁgha*.[16] Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar's opinion, as expressed in his Carmichael Lectures,[17] is worth mention here. He says that the Buddha in his discourses, used certain terms like *'Jñpti', 'Pratijña'* etc., and that he never stopped to explain these technical terms, is enough to make us believe that they must have been already current and fairly well-known in his time. We may not however accept the minor details of the procedure of the Buddhist monastic life as applicable to the procedure adopted by the political assemblies of the great republican states. But the procedure followed in the Buddhist assemblies were followed almost in all other spheres of life.

Republics in the Mahābhārata :

The great epic Mahābhārata is eloquent in describing the characteristics of the republics which distinguished them from the monarchies. In the *Śānti-Parva,* Chapter 107, there are definite traces in the discussion between Bhīṣhma and Yudhishthirā which indicate that the characteristics given go back to fairly early times. In the verses 6 to 22 we get a glimpse as to what a *'gaṇa'* is, how it can flourish and what its weaknesses are, that lead to its downfall. "The disquisition in the Mahābhārata makes it clear that *gaṇa* refers to the whole body politic, the entire political community and in the alternative, the parliament and not to the 'governing body'.[18] The large personnel that composed the *gaṇa* is referred to in verse 8 and the whole body of the Gaṇa is mentioned in verse 24. It is obvious that matters of vital policy cannot be kept secret in such a large body, hence the wise-speaker Bhīṣma recommends in verse 23 for an executive body, smaller in size, to exercise the power of conducting the affairs of the community. The verses up to 32 discuss in minute details, the organization of the executive authority, the manner of the execution of this authority and also the administration of law and justice. This discussion between Bhīṣma and Yudhisthira is important because it throws light on almost all the aspects of a republican state and the characteristic features that distinguish it from the conventional organs of a monarchical state. Another point of interest in this discussion is the deep knowledge and wide experience of the author of the *Mahābhārata* of the working of successful and unsuccessful republics. An easily acceptable theory we can derive at is that, there were a good number of self-governing people living around the land of the *Kurus* and *Pāndavas*. Gradually the empire builders either subjected these states to the monarchical authority or reduced them to an inferior status of vassal states.

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[16] K. P. Jayaswal, *Article in Modern Review,* 1913. p. 664. Quoted in *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* Majumdar R. C. Ch. III. p. 239.

[17] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures,* first series. p. 184.

[18] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. XIV. p. 103.

We have numerous evidences in the *Mahābhārata* of this treatment given to *gaṇa-rājyas*. In the *Sabhāparva* we are told that Yudhisthira sent each of his four brothers to four different directions of the country to conquer the states which were outside his sway.[19] Arjuna, the bravest of the brothers, proceeded towards the north and conquered all the independent states thereof. These self-governing people are described to be well trained in warfare and keen to preserve their independence. Their effort in doing so was so arduous that Arjuna could not fight with them without the military assistance of the states he had already befriended.

Some people think that these small states of the northern region were not fully organized political entities, they were rather semi-independent states or trade-guilds trying to maintain their independent existence. If we put reason into our thought,

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[19] *Mahābhārata*, Sabhāparva, Ch. 25. Sl. 2–4. (Ch. 23. Sl. 2–4. Poona Ed.).

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we would realize that small guilds of traders would not possibly be so well equipped in arms and warriors, to face the might of Arjuna, nor would the great Arjuna seek for military assistance, had he been faced with semi-independent political units. These states of the northern region must have enjoyed the status of fully independent, sovereign states. A monarch in the days of the *Kauravas* and *Pāndavas* could become a *'Digvijayi'* king only after conquering sovereign states and making them pay tax to the central revenue department. Arjuna had to accomplish this task of putting them under the central revenue system. The whole incident referred to in the *Sabhāparva* is an evidence of the existence of republican states which continued to maintain political and economic independence in the northern region.

In chapter 107 of the *Śāntiparva,*[20] Bhīṣma says, "The leaders of the *gaṇas* having assembled should adopt measures ensuring the welfare of the *gaṇas*" and those *gaṇas* which severed themselves from others, their wealth would dwindle down and they would fall back on their individual resources. This was the cause perhaps, of the great confederacies that they usually joined. The *Licchavis* and the *Videhas* were two constituent units of such a confederacy.

The *Mahābhārata* refers to a few more important *saṁghas* like the *Yaudheyas,*[21] which finds mention in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyi.* It continued to exist during the time of the Greek invasions and even after that up to 3rd century A.D. The *Mālavas* and the *Kshudrakas* are two other republics which are always mentioned together in the *Mahābhārata.* These republics had the reputation of facing the Greek power gallantly. Later on, the *Kshudarakas* seem to get merged completely with the *Mālavas* who eventually migrated to Ajmer-Chittor-Tonk area about *c.* 100 B.C. Thus we find the great epic containing important discourses and events to prove that the republican states had flourished in India as early as *c.* 500 B.C. and even earlier.

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[20] *Mahābhārata,* Shāntiparva, Ch. 107. Sl. 25: 26.

[21] Ibid., Karnaparva, Ch. V. Sl. 46.

Republics in Kautilya's Arthaśāstra:

Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* is another monumental work in the field of Hindu political theories and institutions. His treatment of political science in this book has made it rather a Kingly-Science yet he does not fail to appreciate the value of republican states during and after foreign invasions. In this respect we may take Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* to be a valuable source of information of the period 325 to 300 B.C. The historical accounts of the Greek writers also represent the same period, though on many occasions their statements tend to describe the conditions of their own institutions. The historical sense of the Greek writers was, however, sharp enough and we cannot dismiss their informations, mistaking them for representing the Hellenistic and not Indian institutions.

The republic which have suffered the menace of the Greek invasion of the border land, had for a short time to submit to the power of the *Yavanas*. And when the *Yavana* power declined, they transferred their allegiance to the emperor of the easterners. This timely submission probably saved them from annihilation and gave them a lease of life on conditions of submission and military aid. "Their value was understood by the empire builders of the fourth century B.C. and Kautilya, a firm believer in monarchy, went so far as to extol the value of republican aid to a conqueror aspiring after universal domination. In his eyes their help was superior in value to the gain of an army or an ally". Kautilya calls upon the conqueror to secure the services of these corporations. In short, his policy was similar to that persued by the kings of medieval France towards the republican cantons of Switzerland.

In the days of Kautilya, a large number of republics existed which he broadly classified into two categories. One of them was the class whose consuls bore the title of '*Rājā*' or 'King'. As he contrasts them with the other class he hints that the latter had no provision for this title and did not allow it. Such constitutions are known to have existed from the evidence of coins.

Trade corporations known as Śreṇis:

The corporation of the warriors of Kamboja and Ṣurāṣtra

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and some other countries, lived by agriculture, trade and by wielding power of weapons. Kautilya calls them *'Kshatriyasreṇi;* therefore Dr. Shamshāstri has translated it as the corporation of the warriors. Actually they lived by agriculture, trade and other occupations and not weapons alone. Therefore they are referred to as *'Vārtāśuśtropajivi' saṁghas.*

Rājshabdopajīvi Saṁghas :

The class of republics consisting of the *Licchavis, Vṛjika, Mallaka, Madraka, Kukura, Kuru, Pañchāla* and others took the title of *rāja.*[22] "By the term *Vṛijis,* Kautilya means *Videhas* only, because *Licchavikas,* he has mentioned already." "The *Kurus* had been in earlier times under monarchy. Their adoption of republican constitution must, therefore, be dated after the Buddha and before Kautilya."[23] About the Videhas having adopted a republican constitution, we have evidence of Patañjali. Pañchālas are referred to in Buddhist texts as divided into two kingdoms, but Kautilya refers to them as a republic. Patañjali corroborates the opinion of Kautilya. The *Licchavis* survived all other republican states. *Mallas* do not live so long. They disappear during the time of the Mauryas, as a republican community.

League of republics :

The policy of the Maurya imperialism towards the republican states was largely based upon the *Arthashāstra* of Kautilya. To be precise we may say that the Maurya policy was to allow honourable existence to those republics which were strong and united into confederacies. These confederacies were strong and almost invincible. Those which were isolated were to be weakened by a policy of internal division and then reduced by force.

We learn from the Mauryan history that a few such isolated republics had already been brought within the empire. Some of the confederated republics were treated on terms of equality while others were subsidized and probably expected to render military assistance for acquisition of army from them, is a condition contemplated as against pure alliance (*Mitra-lābha*). The result of this policy was that the stronger republics survived Mauryan Imperialism. The *Kshudraka,* the *Mālava* and the *Vṛijis* were some of those who formed leagues and they have also been mentioned by Kātyāyana and Patañjali as sovereign states.[24]

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[22] *Kautilya Arthaśāstra,* BK. XI, Ch. I. Sl. 4 & 5.

[23] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VII. p. 50.

Republics mentioned in the Greek accounts :

The Greeks, who have left their accounts of the political conditions of India, generally cover the period when Kautilya wrote his *Arthashāstra* and the period when Mauryan empire prospered. "The historians of Alexander's campaign have described a number of states as 'free', 'autonomous' or 'independent', by which they mean republican.[25] The Greek impressions about the forms of states and governments are neither negligible nor refutable, because political sense was nowhere more developed than in ancient Greece. Their accounts are so much in detail, furnishing informations not only about the forms of states and governments but about the administrative procedures also. We can safely deduce from these informations that there functioned republican states and kingships simultaneously.

Kingship with popular council :

It is also interesting to note that in some of the monarchical states the kings ruled with the help of popular councils. Megasthenes' and Arrian's description of ancient India tells us, "Herakles was born among them, (the descendents of *Dionysos,* who inhabit the hill country) and he was the founder also of no small number of cities, the most renowned and greatest of which he called *Palimbothra* (Patliputra) ...... At least after many years had gone, most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government, though some retained the kingly until the inva-

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[24] See K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. XVII. p. 116.

[25] Ibid., Chap. VIII. p. 54.

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sion of the country by Alexander."[26] The same authors tell us, "The mountains are inhabited by pigmies, but those who live near the sea have no kings."[27] And again, "From the time of *Dionysos* to *Sandro-Kottōs* the Indians counted 153 kings and a period of 6042 years, (but among these a republic was thrice established) " and a foot-note to this says, "and during this time, thrice movements were made for liberty."[28]

Besides democracies, there were states which had aristocratic government, in perfect co-ordination with law. According to the accounts of Arrian, republican trends were followed in these states. Under the heading "The Arrian's *Anabasis*", we read the speech of Alexander, delivered to the resentful officers of his army. He said, "It was reported that the country beyond the river *Hyphasis* was fertile and that the men were good agriculturists and gallant in war and they conducted their own political affairs in a regular and constitutional manner. For the multitude was ruled by the aristocracy, who exercised their authority with justice and moderation."[29] And from further description it appears that their material prosperity and military equipment was better than the other people. Unfortunately this republic goes unnamed in the Greek accounts.

Arrian's description of the self-governing people on the banks of *'Beas'* tells us of the greater number, superior size and courage of the elephants that their forces used and Dr. Jayaswal's conviction is, "It was from the doors of the unnamed republic that the campaign of Alexander assumed the form of retreat."[30] We come to know from the accounts of the various Greek writers that all the states Alexander met, on his way back, down the Indus and upto the Indian frontier in

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[26] *Megasthenese and Arrian, Ancient India* (as described by them), Translated by J. W. McCrindle, p. 37

[27] Ibid., p. 161.

[28] Ibid., p. 208.

[29] Arrian, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, Ch. XXV. p. 121. Translated by McCrindle.

[30] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. VIII. p. 58.

Baluchistan, were republican. Some of the names, Arrian mentions, such as, the *Mallois, Sibois* and *Kshudrakas,* have also been referred to by the *Jātakas* and *Patañjali.*

The evidence of the existence of the *Mālavas* and *Kshudrakas* as a league is found in Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* and the comments of Patañjali on Pāṇini, (Khandikadibhya sch. IV 2 45). Dr. Jayaswal says, the net result of all the discussion is to say that, "the league of the *Kshudraka-Mālavas* did not exist in the time of Pāṇini, though they themselves existed evidently and that the league was a living institution in the time of Kātyāyana and that of Patañjali. The organization thus outlived the Mauryan empire."[31]

Agra Śreṇis :

The *'Agra-Śreṇis'* mentioned by 'Diodorus' and 'Curtius' as *Agalassians,* are described as a martial race who barricaded the narrow streets of their city-states and fought with vigour so that Alexander in pressing the attack lost a few Macedonians. Curtius adds to this information that those brave fellows set fire to their houses and town when they found it difficult to save their wives and children.[32] The *'Śreṇis'* is found in Kautilya in the list of republics which did not call their president *Rājan* and which were martial. The addition of the term *'agra'* shows that there were probably more than one unit in the *'śreṇi'* and the one that the Greeks faced was the first of them. Dr. Jayaswal thinks that the find spot of the *Yaudheya* coins suggests that the unnamed state in the Greek accounts was probably of the powerful *Yaudheyas.*

In the report of the classical writers we come across other important republics, the *Mallas* and the *Kshudrakas.* They were the free people who had preserved their liberty inviolate, for ages. And the hundred representatives of the Mallas and *Kshudrakas* said that it was the first time that they were entrusting their liberty to Alexander the Great. Curtius' report reads

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[31] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VIII. p. 61.

[32] McCrindle's *Indian Invasion by Alexander,* Book IX, p. 232 and Book XVII, p. 285.

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as follows: "Alexander was returning after his battle with the *Sibis*. While returning, he met the ambassadors of the *Sudracae* (*Sudrakas*) and *Malli* (*Mallas*), proffering submission.... A hundred ambassadors came to the king from the two nations. They all rode in chariots and were men of uncommon stature and of a very dignified bearing.... They informed him that they surrendered into his hands themselves, their cities and their territories, and that he was the first to whose authority and protection they had intrusted their liberty which for so many ages they had preserved inviolate."[33]

The description of the *Malla* and *Kshudrakas* suggests clearly that they were a self-governing people. Besides, the numerous ambassadors indicate that they were representatives of different sections of the population. In the descriptions of "*Diodorus Siculus*" translated by Dr. R. C. Majumdar,[34] we read "Alexander having given orders to his army to march along the river in a line parallel to the course of the navigation, proceeded on his voyage, down stream towards the ocean, and on reaching the dominions of *Sambastai* landed to invade their country. They were a people, inferior to none in India, either for numbers or for bravery. They dwelt in cities in which the democratic form of government prevailed and on hearing that the Macedonians were coming to attack, collected 60,000 foot soldiers, 6,000 horses and 500 chariots. They were thrown into great alarm by the novelty of the appearance it presented and the unexpectedness of its presence....they adopted the advice of their elders not to fight and therefore sent on, an embassy consisting of fifty of their foremost citizens."

Paṭal :

Q. Curtis Rufus reports about another type of state which was no pure monarchy, neither was it a pure republican state.

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[33] Account of Q. Curtins Rufus, collected by R. C. Majumdar in '*Classical Accounts of India*'–Ch. XXV, p. 51.

[34] Account of Diodorus Siculus, collected by R. C. Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India*, p. 180. Also McCrindle, *Indian Invasion by Alexander*, Ch. CII. pp. 292-93.

This was the state *'Tanala'* (*Pātala* the correct form), a city of great note ruled by two hereditary kinds of two different houses, while a council of elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority. This was the pattern of rule known in ancient India as *'Dvai Rājya'* a political constitution drawn on the same lines as the Spartan. Megasthenes gives a few names of mountain republics and says, "they are free, have no kings and occupy mountain regions, where they have built many cities." He names them as: (1) *Matte corai* (2) *Singhai,* (3) *Marshai,* (4) *Rarungai* and (5) *Morsunoi.* Before reaching the *Kathaians* (*Kshatriyas*) Alexander had already met several independent Indian Republics on the banks of the Rāvi, these republics have gone unnamed. Adjoining the *Kathaians,* there was the state of the *'Sophytes'* which M. Sylvain Levi has correcently identified with *'Saubhuti'*.

The Ambasṭhas :

Ambasṭhas were another important republic which is mentioned, not only in the writings of the Greeks alone but also by Patañjali and the *Mahābhārata,* as a political community. The account of the *Ambasṭhas* as found in the *Purāṇas* is altogether different. The *Purāṇas* refer to the *Ambasṭhas* originally as a monarchy. The change in their constitution was from monarchy to republic.

Other independent nations :

Greek writers refer to a number of smaller independent nations, organized on republican principles. These smaller republics had resisted the power of Alexander. They were the *'Xathoi'* or the *Kshattriyas.* The name of the *Kshatriyas* has also been mentioned in the *Arthashāstra,* Kautilya has placed them along with the *Śreṇis.* Dr. K. P. Jayaswal in his 'Hindu Polity'[35] has mentioned a few states whose names are found in the writings of Arrian and others. They are: (1) *Ossadioi,* (2) *Musicani,* (3) *Brachmanoi* and to the South of *Brachmanoi* (4) was the State of *Pātala* in the delta of the Indus. Dr.

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[35] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VII. pp. 64—66.

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Jayaswal has very appropriately identified the *Ossadioi* with the *Vasātis* of the *Mahābhāratā*" who appear there as neighbours of the *Kshudrakas* and the *Mālavas* in the group commencing with the *Ambasṭhas.* The proof of the existence of the *Vasātis* along with the *'sibis'* is found in Kātyāyana and Patañjali's works. The two have been grouped with the republican *Rājanyas.*

About the *'Musicani'* state we have little information. Nothing positive is available about the type of this state. Whether it has a regal or a popular constitution is not known. But in the description found in the Greek accounts we read that they were citizens who "took their meals in common" and that "they did not recognise the institution of slavery". From these two characteristics of the *'Musicani'*, we can derive at least that their habits were not exactly those of the people living under a monarch or under the Social System of 'Superior-inferior' relationship amongst the people. This can be taken as a positive sign of the prevalence of republican trends and democratic ideals of liberty and equality amongst the people who have not been definitely identified as a republican state.

The *'Brachmanoi'* mentioned as a 'nation' by Arrian[36] and Diadorus,[37] or "the country of the *Brachmans*" can easily be recognized as identical with what Patañjali calls, *"Brāhmanako nāma janapadāh"*.[38] The collective action taken by this small community, their joint efforts and leadership against the invasion of Alexander, was specially marked down for revenge by Alexander. "These philosophers", writes Plutarch, referring to the city of Brahmins, gave him no less trouble than the mercenaries, because they received the princes who declared for him and encouraged the free states to revolt from his authority. On this account he hanged many of them."[39]

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[36] Arrian, VI, p. 159. *Indian Invasion by Alexander,* McCrindle.

[37] *Diodorus,* Ch. CII. p. 293, McCrindle.

[38] *Patañjali,* quoted by V. S. Agrawala in *'Geographical data in Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi,* Journal of the U. P. Historical Society, Vol. XVI, Pt. I. pp. 10—51.

[39] I. I. A. p. 306 McCrindle.

Before the arrival of Alexander, a few small nations had migrated from their original territory to avoid submission to foreign power. The tendency of migrating from the place of origin to safer quarters, for the sake of the maintenance of liberty, was quite common with the republican states. The *Vṛshiṇīs,* the *Sibis,* the *Mālavas,* all of them left their place of origin probably under the same circumstances.

With the evidence of the Greek accounts left here for us, we can safely conclude that the "major portion of the Punjab and Sindh which came under the survey of Greek writers, shows only two or three monarchies, the important ones of which were the kingdoms of *Poros* and the *Abhisāras.* Otherwise the whole country was republican."[40]

Republics under the Mauryas :

The evidence of the republics under the Mauryas is available from the most authentic book of the time, the '*Arthashāstra*' of Kautilya. A detailed analysis has already been made earlier why Kautilya took into consideration the existence of republican states and what importance he attributed to them.

Aśokan inscriptions :

The other authentic source of information about the existence of republican states during the later period of Mauryan rule is the Edicts of Aśoka. In his inscriptions we can recognize the republican character of many of the political communities. We may examine the constitutions of the many communities mentioned in these inscriptions in later chapters. In Rock Series, Sec. V and XIII, we find about thirteen names of states out of which we know about a definite number, which had non-monarchical constitutions.

Numismatic evidence :

A very positive evidence is found in the collection of coins, giving us relevant legends about the non-monarchial states.

Coins collected at Taxila by the late General Cunningham and published in his 'Coins of Ancient India', disclose names of some sovereign communities which struck their coins in the early Maurya period. John Allan's study of ancient Indian coins reveals to us that new republics had maintained their sovereign entity even after the Mauryan period and some of them survived the invasions of foreigners. Republics like the *Yaudheyas, Mālvas* and *Arjunāyans* continued to exist even during the time of the *Suṇgas.*

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[40] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 67.

John Allan writes in the introduction of the "Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India": "On several (of the coins) the word *'gaṇa'* actually occurs in combination with proper name. Thus we have the *gaṇa* of the *Yaudheyas* and *Arjunāyans*".[41] John Allan has expressed his opinion in the same introduction that the word *'gaṇa'* signifies a tribe. We need not ponder over the controversy whether these *'gaṇas'* were still in the tribal condition because Dr. K. P. Jayaswal[42] and also Dr. A. S. Altekar[43] have very ably proved that the republican system was post-tribal and philosophic, that the *'gaṇa'* had a definite constitutional meaning and denoted a form of government.

The Yaudheya coins :

When therfore we get on hundreds of coins, referring not to the kings of the *Yaudeyas,* the *Mālavas* or the *Arjunāyanas,* but to the body politic, it is clear that they refer not to a tribal organization but to a full grown state. The right of issuing coins is the sign of sovereign authority of a community organized under definite laws. In the *Suṇga* period we have some of the old republics which survived the Mauryan imperialism. Evidence for most of them is available from their coins[44] and according to numismatic evidence they continued to exist as

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[41] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,"* Pt. V., p. LXXIV

[42] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. XV. p. 110.

[43] A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India,* Ch. VI. pp. 99-100.

[44] Vincent Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in Ancient India,* Vol. I, pp. 165, 181.

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self-governing people up to the middle of the fourth century of the Christian Era.

The coins of the *Yaudheyas* have been found in the eastern Punjab and all over the country between the Sutlej and the Jamuna rivers. Two of them found at Sonpat between Delhi and Karnal are of the greatest importance. Some of them bear the legend *"Yaudheyānām."* A second type of coins bear the impression of the presiding deity of heroism and war. Dr. Jayaswal takes this to be representing 'La Liberte'. The third type of coins are purely constitutional. It is struck in the name of the *Yaudheya-gaṇa* for it reads like this: *"Yaudheya-gaṇsya-jaya"*, meaning victory of the *Yaudheya gaṇa.* In some of these coins we find the letter *'dvi'* and on some others the letter *'tri'.* They signify perhaps the second or third sections of the republic. We learn from the monumental records that the *Yaudheyas* had elected presidents and generals.[45]

The coins of the Mālavas :

John Allan has quoted six specimens of coins issued by the Mālavas. He has classified them into two groups, those with the legend, *"Malavānām jayah"* and those with, what are said to be, the names of chiefs. This small series of coins has been well preserved in the Indian Museum. John Allan says that the epigraphy of those, illustrated in the I.M.C., suggests that the second to third centuries A.D. would probably be the period to which they belong.[46] They also show that the *Mālavas* occupied a limited area in eastern Rajputana. This agrees with the reference to them in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta. The similarity of the coin legends to those of the *Arjunāyans* and *Yaudheyas* suggests that the *Mālavas* were not very remote from them and were probably their neighbours on the north.

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[45] Vijaygarh inscription in Bharatpur State, quoted by R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India,* Ch. III, p. 130.

[46] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, Pt. V under the heading, "Tribal Coins."

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The coins of the Śibis :

Śibis, the associates of the *Mālavas,* are mentioned in their coins, which were found in Rājputānā at Nāgari near Chitor.[47] Cunningham's readings of the specimen are taken to be correct. He reads them as *"Majhamikāya-Śibi-Janapadasa"*. The legend means, "of the janapada of the *Śibis* of the middle country". The *Mahābhārata* puts them with the *Trigartas* and *Mālavas,* conquered by Nakula and as paying tribute to Yudhisthira. They along with the *Trigartas* and *Yaudheyas* were thus subjugated to monarchical power. The *Śibis* are identified with the *Siboi* of the Greek accounts, to be located between the Indus and Chenab. The date of the coins is 2nd century B.C.

Coins of the Arjunāyanas :

Coins of the *Arjunāyanas* are not found in abundance like those of the *Yaudheyas* or other *gaṇas.* The coins bearing their name in Sanskrit are rare. The full legend on the available coins is "Ā (r) junāynānijaya—"meaning victory to the Arjunāyanas.[48]

Coins of the Vṛṣṇis :

The *Vṛṣṇis* have a glorious history since the days of the *Mahābhārata.* They have been referred to in the *Śāntiparva* along with other *Yādava* communities who formed a confederation.[49] Out of the five constituent units, the *Vṛṣṇis* survived till the first century B.C.

The coins that had been issued by the *gaṇa* of the *Vṛṣṇis* have been found near northern Punjab and according to John Allan, they belong to the first century B.C. The legend in *Brāhmī* verse on the obverse and *Kharoshthi* on the reverse is the same on both sides. General Cunningham transliterated it as: *"Vṛṣṇi Rājā janāgaṇasya bhubarasya"* meaning, "of the protector of the *Rājanya* (or warrior) tribe of *Vṛṣṇis*".[50]

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[47] *Ibid.,* p. CXXIII.

[48] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,* p. LXXXII.

[49] *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, Ch. 82. Sl. 29 (Poona Ed.).

[50] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,* (191: No. 17) p. 281.

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New names of gaṇas in the Mahābhārata :

In the list of Samudragupta we find the names of the *Mālavas,* the *Madras,* the *Yaudheyas,* the *Arjunāyanas,* etc. In the Gupta period only these republics retire to oblivion. The Mahābhārata provides us with some data of about c. 100 B.C. in which some new republics are mentioned. These are names which we have not met in early literature. The first is the *gaṇas* of *Utsavasaṇketas*[51] and the second was the *gaṇa* of the *Śūdras* and that of the *Ābhiras* placed in the Indus Valley.[52]

The *Śūdra* republic is an example of the type of *Brāhmaṇa* republic of which the Greek writers have made a mention of. Samudragupta's Allahabad Pillar inscription gives a few names of states which were probably non-monarchical but some of them seem to have changed into monarchical form after a republican career for sometime. The *Ābhīras* are such an example. Considering the power and the long career in their new homes, the period between 150 B.C. to 350 A.D. was the period of revival of the Hindu-republics. It was the period of the rise of republics in Rajputana.

On the other hand, the same period was one of decay and decline of republican states in the Punjab and western India. After enjoying prosperity and political power for a long period, the most well-known republics had to subject themselves to the power of Greeks, Scythians and Parthians who ultimately caused their disintegration.

The older, smaller republics had become mere constitutions. They had lost their biological significance, retaining only the political phraseology. Dr. Jayaswal says, "they were no more *sāṁghas* but were *gaṇas,* self-governments without states, states without power".

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[51] *Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparva, Ch. 29. Sl. 8. (Poona Ed.).

[52] *Ibid.,* Ch. 29. Sl. 9.

CHAPTER III

KINDS OF REPUBLICS

Republican organization of a state signifies a noticeable advancement in the political career of a people. It implies that the people living within a definite territory has experimented within that society, various kinds of political organisations and through the various stages of political development has reached the pivotted goal. Republicanism can be said to be the last phase of organisational experience.

Process of transition from monarchy to republic :

The rise and fall of monarchies have provided to the subjects, time and again, the opportunity to take up the reins of administration in their own hands. The citizens or their representatives have availed of the opportunity, have consciously tried various kinds of government and have known the various methods of running the administration. "In all or nearly all the Greek city states," writes Dr. Bryce, "the first form of government was a monarchy or a chieftainship, but as we learn from the Homeric poems, it was a monarchy tempered by public opinion, which found expression in the public assembly, (of the city or tribe) convoked by a chieftain and in practice guided by the leading men, but in which any free man might speak his mind."[1]

After a time either the kingship died out, being replaced by elected magistracies or was greatly reduced in authority. Power passed in most cities to the heads of chief families. Their rules sometimes complied with the old customs, sometimes were based on force only. But everywhere demands arose for a definition by law, of the powers of magistrates and for the admission of the bulk of the citizens to the public offices and

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[1] James Bryce, *Modern Democracies,* Ch. XVI. p. 190.

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the councils. This was perhaps the beginning of democracy in the west.

Characteristics of Roman and Greek republics:

All democratic republics, either of Rome or Greece, had, what we should call a constitution. But the constitutions were not so much like those of our age, such as that of the United States or Switzerland. They were merely a mass of laws, which could be altered by the people, when and as they pleased. The laws of these states covered the whole of civic life; every little city commonwealth was an independent nation and as such could make war or peace, maintain its own army and navy. There lived a population not more than thirty or forty thousand of free citizens. The constitutional law of these city commonwealths constantly altered, sometimes due to a natural process of evolution from an oligarchy to democracy and sometimes when the occurrence of a sedition had made new guarantees for liberty necessary. "Athens alone had lived under eleven constitutions from 624 B. C. to the settlement of 404 B. C.".[2]

Process of transition of states in ancient India:

The process of transition in the form of the states in ancient India was not very dissimilar from the Greek contemporaries. The *Kurus* and *Pañchālas,* who had been under monarchies according to *Vedic* literature and the *Jātakas,* adopt republican form of government about the fifth or the fourth century B. C. Kautilya describes these two states in his *Arthaśāstra* as republics.[3] Prof. Rhys Davids has cited another example of the *Videhas,* who had formerly been under monarchy and joined a republican confederation during the time of the Buddha.[4]

Pāṇini's analysis of states and people:

Pāṇini made a scientific analysis of the various kinds of states and people whom he might have come across during his travels. His account and analysis should be accepted as authentic because they are given from his personal experiences. Moreover, the social, political and geographical descriptions are incidentally referred to without any political intention. Pāṇini says that the whole country was divided in *janapadas*. A *janapada* broadly comprised of both urban and rural areas and was at once a geographical, political and cultural unit. These political units could be mainly classified under monarchical or *ekarāja* and republican or *saṁgha* polity.

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[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] *Kautilya, Arthaśāstra, 'Saṁghavṛttam'*. Bk. XI. Sl. 5.

[4] Rhys. Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 26.

Monarchy was the accepted and more common form and the other one was a simultaneous growth in the north-western region in particular. It induces us to believe that at least some states had left the tribal condition and attained full statehood. Pāṇini's observation of the north-western region, should be taken as correct because he was born in that very region.

Ancient Indian republics were states and not tribes:

Some of the important people of the *Vāhīka* country, such as the *Yaudheyas, Mālavas, Kṣudrakas,* were practising an obvious mechanism of government, such as an elected council under an elected chief or a president. That India possessed a considerable number of flourishing republics is also attested to by the testimony of the Greek writers. Some other eminent republics of the north-eastern region are also distinctly mentioned in the Pāli literature of the sixth and fifth century B. C. The *Śākyas* left their indelible mark on the national life and literature of *Āryan* India for their ideals of right and equality and the emancipation of the low. The *Licchavis* distinguished themselves for their confederal system and ultra-democratic system of the administration of law and justice. The other communities which had gone far ahead of tribal conditions of life were the *Uttara-Kurus* whose name had become proverbial, the *Madras* and the *Kaṭhas* who attained eminence in learning. These powerful people were not social groups of a simple kind, the members of which acted together only because they spoke a common dialect or for such common purposes as warfare. They were people, politically organised for law under a particular type of government. Nilakanta Shastri says, "Alexander planned a great drive against the tribal confederations of the *Mālavas,* and their allies."[5] But in the accounts of Alexander's historians, handed down to us, we find high applause for the powerful aristocracies and demo-cracies, who had no kings.[6] These states have been described as fully developed and politically organized states. Besides such states, the Greeks have also described certain tribal people, whom they came across during their campaign. From this distinction made between the states and the tribes by the Greeks, we can safely conclude that the "great drive" of Alexander was not against "tribal confederations", but against highly organized states.

John Allan, in his "Catalogue of coins in ancient India" has called the coins of the *Yaudheyas* and *Arjunāyanas* as tribal coins.[7] But the coins he has cited and interpreted, bear the legend that they were issued in the name of the self-governing people. The issuing of coins is in itself a mark of political advancement. That the political power was vested in the people, in the above mentioned states, definitely proves that they had left the tribal condition and had already attained an advanced condition of political life which entitled its people to participate in the affairs of the state. The above opinions therefore prove to be self-contradictory.

Classification of the ancient republics:

The republican states of ancient India have been variously called and classified by the modern authors. According to the terms of political science the classification is confusing. Dr. R. C. Majumdar has said that, "both oligarchic and republican government flourished in this country".[8] When we examine

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[5] Nilakanta Shastri, K.A. *Age of the Nandas and Mayuryas*, Ch. II. p. 71.

[6] McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, ... pp. 37, 161 and 208.

[7] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, Introduction. **Pt. V.**

[8] R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, p. 164.

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the states functioning during the period between sixth c. B.C. and the first half of fourth c. A.D., we find the main types of governments, the monarchies and aristocratic republics. Oligarchy is a rare instance to be found. It is defined in the political language as "the rule of the few when that rule is looked upon with disfavour; rule when it is exercised not by the best but self-interested men unjustly".[9] As a logical consequence of unjust rule, the state would be divided against itself and fall an easy prey of the imperialist powers who are on constant vigil to curb down such states. Oligarchies would hardly get an opportunity to grow and leave marks on the pages of history. We can get the records of those states alone which gained a longevity and by the virtue of which they left their traces behind. These were mostly the aristocratic republics of the north-eastern and the north-western region.

At another place, Dr. R. C. Majumdar interprets the technical terms to mean democracies, although elsewhere he mentions without comment, the Greek references to the aristocracies as well as democracies of the Indus Valley in Alexander's time. "On the other hand" points out Dr. Ghoshal, "Jayaswal distinguishes under the appropriate technical titles the three types of republics, namely aristocracies, democracies and mixed constitutions. Lastly, Bhandarkar distinguishes, with a different interpretation of the terms in question, not only between oligarchies and democracies but also between two subtypes of each class. The first group consists of unitary and federal oligarchies and the second of town-wide and country-wide democracies."[10] A detailed study of the constitutional structures of the states of this period, reveals to us that these republics were neither democracies in the strict sense of the political term nor oligarchies. Such contentions are not supported by authentic evidence. They are also inherently improbable.

Dr. Jayaswal has said, "Pāṇini's rule about the *Rājanyas* deals with *Rājanya-janapada*. The *Rājanyas* were, therefore,

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[9] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Vol. XVI, p. 770.

[10] U. N. Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture,* Ch. VII, p. 366.

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a democracy."[11] He classes the *Mahārāja-janapada* among the *Rājanyas* and says that they had also issued coins, the legend of which was originally in *Brāhmi*. But the numismatic evidence does not confirm this information. John Allan says, "there are no coins bearing the legend *Mahārāja-janapadasa,* and the existence of the *Mahārājā* state which has been based on this reading still awaits proof. The coins in question really have the inscription *Rājānajanapadasa*.... there are no letters before the *r* for prinsep.... Cunningham, taking some fortuitous marks as letters and forgetting that he had already read it almost correctly in A.S.R., XIV, p. 150, read the inscription from the drawing as *Maharajasa janapadasa,* but with the number of specimens now available, we have no doubt, that this is wrong and that the coin is one of the well known *Rājanya-janapada* series."[12] This leads us to believe that *Rājanya* coins refer to the usual type of aristocratic republics with this difference that the emphasis is here laid upon the territorial, instead of the caste principle.

On the other hand, Prof. Bhandarkar tells us that another two-fold kind of democracy flourished in ancient India, side by side with tribal oligarchy.[13] These were: (1) *Nigama,* confined to a town and was a citizens' democracy and the other was (2) the *Janapada,* which extended over a province and was tribal in character. These were cities and countries which enjoyed political autonomy as attested by the coins they issued.

Here again the numismatic evidence comes to our aid to show the unsoundness of the argument offered by the critics. Allan's own suggestion that the *Negamā* of the coin legends mean mercantile money tokens issued by the traders, or else 'trade tokens', and that the closely associated coin type with the legend *Pañcha Nekame* (*Skt, Pañcha-Naigamāh*) refers to a group of five guilds, is quite plausible, as also his statement that the enigmatical legends on the reverse of the *Naigama* coins have reference to "the quarters of wards" of the city.[14]

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[11] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 152.

[12] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,* Introduction. Pt. V. p. CIV.

[13] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity,* p. 118.

Prof. Bhandarkar bases his theory of provincial democracy on the coins bearing the legend *Rājanya-Janapadasa* of the *Rājanya people.* He says *Rājanya* does not signify a *Kshatriya* or *Rājputa* title and *janapada* "may rightly be considered as a democracy and hence one distinct form of the political *Saṁgha*".[15] But we have seen earlier that Pāṇini has distinctly mentioned *janapada* as the name of the geographical and political division of the land, which consisted of towns as well as villages. We, therefore, cannot use it as equivalent for democracy of the province since there is distinct term *gaṇa* which stands for number or the multitude or the people. Bhandarkar's further statement that the *gaṇa* was a *Kshatriya* aristocracy with a tribal character is a contradiction in terms, since caste is the solvent of tribe. In fact reference in Pāṇini and in the *Pāli*-texts leave us in no doubt that the *Saṁghas* and *gaṇas* were not clans formed into a tribal *Saṁgha* or confederacy for self-preservation and common tribal good. They consisted of the usual classes of Brahmanical society with a governing body selected out of the best and most advanced class, ruling with the consent of the people. All this discussion leads us to the conclusion that democracy was not the common form to be mentioned, as a kind of republican state in ancient India.

Mixed Republic :

About the mixed type of constitution, referred to by Dr. Jayaswal, and the constitution of *Pātala* cited as its example, was not a combination of aristocracy and democracy but an example of hereditary monarchy tempered by a powerful aristocratic council. Thus the arguments in favour of the prevalence of the democratic elements remain unsupported by evidence.

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[14] U. N. Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, p. 370.

[15] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu polity*, p. 120.

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Unitary and federal republics :

After examining some opinions it can be concluded that the Indian republics can be classified into two sub-types, according to the method of wielding governmental power. They may thus be called Unitary republics and Federal republics. In majority of the republics of the north-western region, the governmental authority was vested in the central assembly or council. All decrees and orders emanated from there. In a few of the republics like the *Śākyas, Licchavis* and *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇīs*, each constituent part of the state had an assembly, exercising legislative, executive and perhaps judicial power also, within its own jurisdiction. These assemblies were however subordinate to the assembly at the centre, generally in the capital.

Confederations of Republics:

Instances of confederations are also not rare, where the constituent units had the right of secession. The *Licchavis* were a unit of such a confederation. *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇīs* were another instance, where imminent possibility of disintegration was the cause of worry for its President, Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Pāṇini's classification :

Pāṇini distinguished between the main types of republics on the basis of the purpose of unified and organized life. The first type, he calls *Āyudhajīvi* republics. The people who came under these, looked to the profession of arms as the distinctive feature of their life. It implies that there were others who did not take to the profession of arms as their distinctive characteristic. Kautilya calls such people as *Rājśhabdopajīvins*. The people of this class of republics came together mainly to live under a common government which indicates that their purpose was purely political. Those who were consecrated to rule over the state were attributed the title of *Rājā*. Kautilya has however modified Pāṇini's term *Āyudhajīvi* and has called it *Vārtā-Śastropajīvi-Saṁghas*. It signifies that the *Śastropajīvins* had started taking to other trades and industries besides the profession of arms for subsistence.

Thus the *Āyudhajīvins* or *Vārtā-Śastropajīvins* and *Rājashabdopajīvins* were the two main kinds of republics according to the tradition created by Pāṇini and Kautilya. Pāṇini handed down to us an exhaustive list of the *Vāhīka* republics, many of which are mentioned in the Mahābhārata.[16] The historians of Alexander also supply us with some important informations in this regard. We learn from their accounts that Alexander had to face resistance from innumerable self-governing people, whom they called democracies or aristocracies, which studded the banks of the Sindhu river. The republics thus mentioned by Pāṇini, Kautilya, the Mahābhārata and the Greek authors, covered a long period of about a thousand years.

The Āyudhajīvi republics :

The Āyudhajīvi republics of Pāṇini were political organizations sharply in contrast with the monarchical form of government. The reason of this deviation may be found in their history. *Puraṇic* tradition tells us that the *Yaudheyas* and *Madras,* the foremost of the *Āyudhajīvins* bore the lineage of *Yaudheya* and *Madra,* the two cadets of a monarchical house in the *Madhyadesha,* who went out to the Punjab and founded states called after their names.[17] While founding new states after their own names, they gave up, it seems, the last traits of monarchy, that is retaining power with the hereditary ruler. The states thus took to republican ways by unifying the entire people through the common profession of the military art.

Kautilya's interpretation :

The content of *Āyudhajīvins* becomes clearer when we see to the discussion of the same class of republics by Kautilya. He has used the term *Vārtā-Śastropajīvi Saṁgha* in the place of *Āyudhajīvins.* He discusses the matter when he distinguishes the *Śastropajīvi Saṁgha from the Rāja-Śābdopajīvins* whose

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[16] *The Mahābhārata,* Bhīṣmaparva, Ch. X. Sl. 44—66. (Poona Ed.).
Sabhāparva. Ch. 29. Sl. 6, 7, 8.
Sabhāparva Ch. 24. Sl. 11, 14, 16.

[17] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 11.

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rulers assumed the title of "Rājan". The *Mahābhārata* tells us that there were "kings in every province in every house".[18] We know from Pāli literature also that the *Licchavis* were ruled by 7707 kings. The inscriptions and coins inform us that the elected or appointed rulers in some Indian republics did assume that title. But when we find people organizing themselves under a government, the members of which do not assume any title or privileged position, they can definitely claim to be purely republican in spirit as well as in form. The martial nature of the *Āyudhajīvins* qualifies them to be called *Śastropajīvins.* In other words their constitutions enjoined on the members to be skilled in military art or we may conclude that *Āyudhajīvins* of Pāṇini are to be taken as republics which considered the profession of arms as the distinguishing feature of their constitution. The contemporaries recognized it, just as the main feature in the other class of republics was the law which allowed the elected president to be called *Rājā.*

Pāṇini mentions a few names of the important *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas* which prevailed during his time: (1) The *Vṛika,* (2) the *Dāmani* and others,[19] (3) the *Trigarta-Shashṭha,* a league of six *Trigartas,* (4) the Yaudheya and others[20] and (5) the *Pārsva* and others.

Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas :

The existence of the *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas* is proved by the records of the Macedonian writers as well as numismatic evidence which will be dealt later. They describe, besides the *Yaudheyas,* the *Mālavas* and the *Kṣudrakas,* whose territory and population were large. They were rich states comprising of several cities. According to the Greek writers these states were well known for their military power and skill.

There are other instances of states, which devoted limited attention to the military skill. The *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas* had occupied the most prominent place. The military republics of the *Vāhika-country* have been mentioned in the *Karṇaparva* of the *Mahābhārata* as the people residing on the land between the five tributary rivers of the Sindhu.[21] Among the other reputed republics were the *Kṣudrakas* and *Mālavas*.

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[18] *Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparva Ch. XIV. Sl. 2, "Grihe Grihe hi rājanaḥ swasya swasya priyankarāh."

[19] *Sūtra of Pāṇini,* 5. 3. 116, "Dāmānyādi Trigarta-śaśṭṭa-chah."

[20] *Ibid.,* 5. 3. 117.

Rājśabdopajīvi Saṁghas :

The six *Trigarṭas,* located at the foot of the mountains, are the first example of the *Rājśabdopajīvins.* Instances of states are given, which were originally monarchies but transformed later into *Rājśabdopajīvi Saṁghas.* Such were the *Madras* and *Vṛijīs.*

King Consul Government :

These states had a government of their own pattern, which may be called King-Consul government. It implied that the president of the state used to be directly elected by the people and after his election he was attributed the title of *Rājā.*

The Rājanya Saṁghas :

Pāṇini mentions another type of republic known as *Rājanyas.* The word *Rājanya* indicates, leaders of families consecrated to rulership. The *Rājanyas* were more aristocratic in nature. The *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis* may be taken as an example. This league is referred to, in the *Purāṇas,* in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata,* as a kingless state. When Yudhiṣthira pays regards to Kṛṣṇa, the President of the *Aṇdhaka-Vṛṣṇi* league, and offers him a seat along with other monarchs, Shishupāla raises an objection to this behaviour of Yudhiṣthira, saying that every one knows that Kṛṣṇa, the leader of the Yādavas is not a king, then how does he deserve the honours of the seat amidst the kings! Moreover, the coins of the Vṛṣṇis are struck in the name of the *Rājanya* and the *gaṇa.* The legend reads as *Vṛṣṇi-rājajana-gaṇasya-bhubarasya.*[22] It shows that the leaders of the ruling families were consecrated

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[21] *The Mahābhārata,* Karṇaparva, Ch. V. Sl. 46.

[22] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,* 191. No. 17.

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to rulership by the people. The state was thus a republic with an aristocratic government. Another name of the *rājanya janapadasa* is found in Pāṇini. It was called *Mahārāja Janapada*. Nothing about their form of government is known. However, Dr. K. P. Jayaswal takes *Rājanya Janapada* as the proper name of a democratic republic. The *Śākyas* and the *Licchavis* may be classed among the *rājanyas* in the generic sense because their rulers were chosen by the people from a distinguished class of *Kshatriyas* and then attributed the title of *Rājā*.

During the time of the Buddha, all the republics were perhaps of the same type. We know about the constitutions of the two most renowned states, the *Śākyas* and the *Licchavis*, which can be classed in the same type of republics. A few more states prevailed during the same time whose detailed constitutions are not available. Prof. Rhys Davids has given us a full list of the republics, actually referred to by name in the oldest Pāli records.[23]

Federations and Confederations of republics:

Besides the various kinds of independent republics, we come across, time and again, leagues and confederations being formed by them. The reasons of such confederations have been given by the author of the *Mahābhārata*. Confederations were formed for better prosperity and greater military power. The League of the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis* have a long history. The *Vajjian* Confederation of the Buddha's time and the League of the *Mallas* and *Kṣudrakas* during the invasion of Alexander, are the examples worth mention. Some of the states joined leagues for a short while, in order to avert an imminent danger. The characteristic feature of all these confederations is, they have tried to maintain the sovereignty of the constituent parts. For an over-all supervision of the common affairs, they had a council or some such organ. But in no case one unit became the follower of the other.

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[23] *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I. Ch. VII. p. 155.

Kautilya's classification :

Kautilya, in his *Arthaśāstra* has referred to two types of *Saṁghas* which are almost the same as Pāṇini's. He has classed republics under (1) *Rājaśabdopajīvi* and (2) *Vārtāśastropajīvi Saṁghas*.

Rājśabdopajīvināh : Among the *Rājaśabdopajīvins* he has placed all those whom we have already examined. Their rulers were entitled to be called *Rājās*. In this class he places the *Licchavika, Vṛjika, Mallaka, Madraka, Kukura, Kuru* and *Pañchāla*.

Vārtāśastropajīvi Saṁgha : In the other class he places *Kamboja, Suraṣtra, Kṣatriyas* and *Śreṇis*. The states in the second category were not called merely *Śastropajīvināḥ*. The prefix *Vārtā* implies, that the states were living by the profession of arms, together with some other trade or industry.[24] In the list of Kautilya we find names of republics which changed over to republican form from kingship. The *Kurus* were such a people, who have been mentioned by earlier authors as a kingdom. Kautilya also mentions the *Śreṇis,* which were, in fact, economic organizations, but in due course of time had acquired political and military importance. *Kshudrakas* and *Mālavas* have not been mentioned by Kautilya. It indicates, probably they had already come under the imperial sway.

The mountain tribes :

A very important group of martial *Saṁghas* occupied some mountainous region in the north-west of India. According to the true import of *Pāṇini's* rule, their ancestors once lived in the *parvata* region and they continued to retain their original appellation of the ancestral home-land, although for the time being they might have migrated elsewhere.[25] They inhabited the region outside the *Vāhīka* country which brings us to the high lands of the north-west as the home-land of these *Āyudhajīvin* tribes. We hear about the *Parvatavāsi-nāh* tribes in the *Mahābhārata* also.[26] Since they are mentioned along with other politically organized communities, we have to accept them as self-governing people, living by the profession of arms, though other details about their state or government are not available. It was perhaps these *parvatiya Āyudhajīvi* republics who offered stout resistance to Alexander in Bactria and Gandhār.

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[24] *Kautilya Arthashāstra,* Bk. XI. Ch. I. Sl. 4 & 5.

[25] *Kāśika,* IV. 3. 91.

Other republics mentioned in the Kāśika :

The *Kāśika* mentions the *Hṛdgoliyas* of *Hṛdgola,* modern Hidda, South of Jalalabad: *Aṇdhakavartīyāh* of *Aṇdhakavarta,* perhaps a district in the north-east of Afghanistan. And the *Rohitgiriyas* of Rohit-giri, (Roha was the old name of Afghanistan) referred in the *Mārkandeya Purāṇa,* as the *Parvatāsrayināh,* the mountain dwellers of the west. Dr. V. S. Agrawala concludes from all this data that "the country of the mountaineers extended from Kashmir to Afghanistan and most of the people settled in those mountains and their valleys were of the *Āyudhajīvi* class.[27]

Semi republican tribes :

The tribes inhabiting the outer belt of the '*Bhārata* country' were probably less organized than those of the innermost belt. Smaller groups of self-governing people and the mountainous *saṁghas* were simple social groups. They lived together because they spoke a common dialect and perhaps belonged to one caste also. We presume it because Pāṇini has given *Taddhita rules* with regard to the *Saṁghas* of the *Vāhīka* country. According to the *Taddhita rules,* the *Brāhmaṇās, Kshatriyas* or even other castes could be distinguished from each other. The provision of the *Taddhita Rules* throws light upon the fact that these communities were organized on the basis of caste. They were governed by some sort of simple social laws but a coercive power for political organization or for giving law, was not felt as the first necessity. From this we can deduce that these communities, though self-governing and independent, were semi republican tribes and not fully developed states. Alexander's historians have named many such tribes who were keen to preserve their liberty. The instance of the *Brāhmaṇa gaṇa* is well known, who were a small community of only hundred families. Plutarch refers to the *Brāhmaṇās* of Sindh who encouraged the free states to revolt against Alexander's authority.[28] These free tribes gave the ruling authority to the descendents of the original dwellers of the territory. Rules about their constitutional structure have not been recorded anywhere.

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[26] *The Mahābhārata,* Bhiśmaparva, Ch. X. Sl. 65 & 66. (Poona Ed.).

[27] V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini,* p. 435,

There were some other organizations which were in the elementary stage of democratic institutions. They were mainly organized for other purposes than political but gradually obtained political significance. Three of such institutions were known as *Śreṇis, Pūgas* and *Vrātas.*

Śreṇis : *Śreṇis* had already proved their strength and political importance. The *Mahābhārata* has referred to them as fighting on the side of Duryodhana and slain by the *Pāndavas* in thousands.[29] It seems that political development was at work among the *Āyudhajīvi* peoples, organizing themselves into new *Śreṇis* and *Pūgas.* The linguistic formation, such as *"Aśrenayah Śrenayah Kritāh Sreni kritāh"* points to these new political developments. *Śreṇis,* however, were a lesser type of organization among the *Yaudheyas.* The *Śreṇis,* Alexander happened to meet were called the '*Agra-Śreṇis*'. It seems that in the case of more than one *Śreṇi* of a particular people there were certain marks to distinguish one group from the other. This appears to be the case among the *Yaudheyas,* whose groups bore definite marks like *dvi* and *tri* as found on their coins.

Pūga : *Pūga* is also one of the less-developed institutions of the *Āyudhajīvi saṁghas.* That it was based on republican principle is made clearer by Pāṇini and the *Kāśika.* The *Kāśika* recognizes it as a *Saṁgha* composed of members from different castes. They did not necessarily unite for a common profession. They had a peaceful character intent on earning money. *Kāśika* while commenting on Pāṇini says, *Nānā-Jātiya aniyatavṛttayo, arthakāmā-pradānāh Saṇghāh Pugāh;*[30] Pāṇini mentions *Pūga* along with the *Saṁghas* and *gaṇas.* He refers casually to its deliberative organ and says that a quorum was necessary for all official functions. This shows that the *Pūgas* decided public matters collectively on the lines of other republican states.

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[28] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander,* p. 306.

[29] *The Mahābhārata,* Karṇa parva, Ch. V. Sl. 40—45.

From the meagre informations available about the constitution of the *Pūgas,* we come to know that they were named in two ways. Some of them were conventionally named after their leaders called *Grāmaṇis* and the others were named under some other circumstances. The few, named after their leaders, are thus: the *Devadaṭṭaka,* the *Yajña Dattaka* etc. The few of the second type are, *Lohadhvaja, Chetaka* and *Śibi.*

Governmental Organization of the Pūgas: The system of naming organizations after their chiefs still prevails in the north-west, among the Pathan tribes of Khels, Isazai and Usafzai. From the method of naming the *Pūgas* and their deliberative organ, we can anticipate that the government was a combination of democratic and aristocratic elements. The aristocratic element is predominantly shown in the working of their Council of Elders which has a determining voice in the adjudication of criminal cases. This element persists in the present form of government of the tribes of the north-western province.

Kumār Pūgas: *Kumār Pūga* was a division of the *Pūga.* The prefix *Kumār* signifies that the young along with the old received social and political recognition in the *Saṁgha.* Pāṇini mentions some such names, e.g., *Kumāra Chetakāh, Kumāra Lohadhvajāh, Kumāra Jimutāh* and so on. Thus we know that *Pūgas* were also an example of a particular type of republican institution.

The Vrāta: The *Vrāta* appears in Pāṇini's works and the *Kāśika* defines it as a *Saṁgha* living by evidence. (*Utsedha-Jīvinah Saṁgha Vrātah*). The *Vrāta* has been mentioned perhaps because they united for a common economic end and were organized like other republican institutions by laws agreed upon by the whole community. The *Vrātas* were simple social groups, which cannot be classed amongst the other more developed forms of *Saṁgha* organizations. The *Vrātas* were skilled in the profession of arms, therefore they are bracketted with the *Āyudhajīvi Saṁgha.* There were pockets of *Vrāta* soldiery around the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi Saṁgha* and Kṛṣṇa says, "Contingents 18,000 strong are organized still as *Vrātas* in our *Kulu organization".*[31] This may be taken as rather a process of Aryanisation.

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[30] *The Kāśika,* On V. 3. 112.

It has been shown that *Kula* was accepted in ancient India as the primary basis of the *gaṇa states.* Representation of the people, on the basis of the *Kula* indicates the dominance of the aristocratic element in ancient republics. But in all cases, the *gaṇas* did possess the necessary ingredients and characteristics of a republic, e.g., the consent of the people, *Vox Populi,* behind all acts of the government, was considered necessary. The *Śākyas,* the *Licchavis,* the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis* and the host of other self-governing people named in the accounts of the Greek historians, all recognized it as the basic principle of the *gaṇa* polity. We can say, in the language of the *Mahābhārata,* that the people agreed to obey the *Kula-Vriddhas,* the elders by knowledge because matters of important strategy could not be decided by the multitude or the *gaṇa* the 'body politic'.

Pātala—An example of a mixed type of government:

In the classical accounts, we come across one example of a mixed type of government. *Pātal,* is referred, by Diodorus, as "a city of great note", and "in this community the command in war was vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses, while a council of elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority."[32] This shows, the government of *Pātala* was a combination of constitutional monarchy and aristocracy. Even this pattern of government does not belong to the group of pure monarchic type.

Even in the *Yaudheya* republics, policies were decided by a smaller group. Their coins were issued in the name of the *gaṇa* as well as the *Mantra-dharas*. One type of their coins bear the legend, *Yaudheyānām jayamantradharānaṁ*. It proves that our ancestors knew that no pure form of constitution was able to produce the ideal effect. Therefore they recommended a kind of government, aristocratic in form and democratic in spirit.

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[31] *The Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparva, Ch. 13. Sl. 55. (Poona Ed.).

[32] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander,* p. 296.

The Mauryan policy towards the republics had weakened them. The broken *gaṇas* had no more power to stand for armed resistance against the foreign attacks of the Greeks, *Scythians* and *Parthians*. Most of the old republics had ceased to function as active republican people. Some of the republics like the *Yaudheyas, Mālavas* and some others, had migrated from the Punjab to Rajputana and still further in. Wherever they settled they called themselves *Mālava* and *Yaudheya gaṇas*. Thus we find, the old *gaṇas based* on the principles decided by Pāṇini, survived with slight modification of name or change of profession due to change in the place, acquiring new positions in the history of Indian republics. There are not many principles of classifying republics except the fundamental ones, decided long ago.

Religious Saṁghas:

According to purpose, Buddhist-organization can be placed amongst the religious *saṁghas*. It may be taken as the exclusive contribution of the new religion of the Buddha. The Great Master called the community, *Bhikkhu Saṁgha* or the republic of *Bhikkhus*. The rules of discipline of the Buddhist *Saṁgha*, when synthesised, give a well-knit system of democracy, "which did not certainly come by accident" says Prof. Gokul Das Dey, "but as a matter of policy being already in vogue in the confederacies of the *Śākyas*, the *Koliyas*, the *Mallas*, the *Vajjis*, from which were largely drawn the members of the *Bhikkhu Saṁgha* in the life time of the Buddha."[33]

Buddhist *Saṁgha* represented a system of government formed by the *Bhikkhus,* for the *Bhikkhus* and of the *Bhikkhus.* This was a democracy in form as well as in spirit. It was a religious brotherhood, therefore, there was no relationship of superior and inferior, neither was any privilege permissible to any particular group of members on any basis. Unlike the political *Saṁgha* of the *Śastropajīvins* or *Rājśabdopajīvins,* the members instead of getting training in arms, were required to fulfil certain educational qualifications and rules of discipline under learned *Bhikkhus* known as *Upajjhāyas* and *Ācaryas.* The characteristic feature of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was its collective sovereignty. It is said in the rules that the assembly in which business was to be conducted, must not be a part but complete by including all the monastic members of a specific area.

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[33] Prof. Gokul Das Dey, Preface of *"Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṁgha."*

All comprehensive nature of the Saṁgha :

The *Saṁgha* would not even alienate the lay disciples who were excluded from the assembly. The desire of living a corporate life, with co-operation from all corners of society is perceptible here.

By a closer study of the *Saṁgha* administration we come to know that the Buddha had adopted the republican ways practised in the communities he was acquainted with. The originality consisted in transferring political corporation to religion and conjuring up an organization to perpetuate the being of that religion. The birth of the religious brotherhood of the Buddha from the constitutional womb of the Indian republic, is of interest not only to this country but to the world at large. The Buddhist *Saṁgha* forms as important part of our study, specially because it supplies us with indirect evidence of the republican institutions in the political sphere. We, therefore, shall study the constitutional aspect of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* in its own place, along with the discussion of the constitutions of other eminent republican states.

CHAPTER IV

REPUBLICS DURING THE BUDDHA'S TIME

(7th–6th *c.* B.C.)

The rise of the Buddhist movement and its significance :

The rise of Gautama Buddha and his new religious movement was a great event in the post-*Vedic* period. This was a period of unfettered thought, a period of vigorous mental and cultural activity directed to creative ends. "There was also a deep undercurrent that strove not to demolish all those barriers which narrowed down life to a round of rites and ceremonies", in the sphere of religion, "but also to reconstruct a new order of things."[1]

This liberal thought throbbed with a spirit of daring that loved to explore new possibilities of life, as also new modes of their expression. It infused boundless energy into the age; that was the outstanding achievement of this revolt. The period was thus marked by a conflict in the ideals of political practice and in this respect it was in tune with the conflict of the liberal and conservative currents of social thought.

People living on the outskirts of powerful monarchies had become impatient with the authority of Brahminism over the society as much as with the regal authority over the state. The people who were left outside the pale of these two types of autocratic powers, were trying hard to break the fetters of this limited life by setting examples if self-governing states, liberated from the shackles of monarchical rule, enjoying the air of freedom and equality in the sphere of politics and in solving the social and agrarian problems too.

Spirit of the self-governing people:

Like the ancient Greeks, the self-governing communities of the time of the Buddha, in their political thinking were essentially realists rather than idealists. This is true of the people of almost all the republican states of the time who, "like Plato, starting from the market place of Athens led us up to a Utopia in the clouds. They were realists in that they based their political studies on the world as it is and human nature as it is rather than on some personal and fanciful conception of what man and the world ought to be. In other words they were realists because......they applied the psychological method to political problems."[2]

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[1] H. N. Sinha, *Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity*, Ch. III. p. 81.

The ancient Indian philosophers and political thinkers had realised that a state or society could never be led nor ever be governed efficiently by the masses, for wisdom never marched with masses. We find a word of caution given to posterity by Bhīṣma, foremost of the warrior philosophers, in the *Mahābhārata*. While discussing the characteristics of the *gaṇas* he says, "the leaders of the *gaṇas* are to be obeyed through the President. O King ! the jurisdiction to conduct the community should be mainly vested in them."[3]

From their own experience the philosophers learnt that the common man feels more confident when he knows that he is the master of the society and he is the maker of his own fate, but psychologically he is averse to shouldering responsibility when he is bound with it. He is satisfied to know that the state is ruled by the many like him but he feels relieved when the real work is done by the few on behalf of the many.

A psychological study of the common citizens made the ancient Indians and also the Greeks, to work out a pattern of government which would be republican in spirit and aristocratic in form. This new pattern is scientifically free from errors because administrative policies and legislative measures can not be kept secret if the multitudes are their makers. Therefore the right of deliberation is vested in the representative assembly house and powers of execution of policies rest with the intelligent few. In a republic the popular sovereignty can be expressed through these representative organs.

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[2] A. E. Zimmern, *Political Thought*, pp. 336-337.

[3] *Mahābhārata*, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107 Sl. 23.

Democracy in the true sense can not be successful if its essential conditions do not prevail in the society. Democracy is a way of life, the foundations of which are not mere participation of the majority in the affairs of the state. Real democracy is founded on equal and exact justice to all men and peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations. The aim of a republican government is to coordinate diverse factors in order to postulate harmony, happiness and good, for the society and the individual who is an inseparable part of the whole and whose interest of life is inalienable from the interest of the community.

With this theoretical background, Plato and Aristotle saw no inconsistency in a republic with a large slave population enjoying limited rights just enough for the efficient administration of their private life. The *Śākyas* and the *Licchavis* in the eastern horizon found no fallacy with their government by assemblies consisting of the representatives of the *Kshatriya* families alone because the assemblies thus founded, enjoyed the confidence of the entire population of the tiny republics. They enjoyed this confidence because these *Kshatriya* families had distinguished themselves as superior to others in respect of education, upbringing, political and administrative experience. The right of participation in the government was extended to all classes of people, where they attained the requisite standards.

Of the many republics during the time of the Buddha we may examine a few as representative of the age. A full list of republican states has actually been referred to by name in the oldest *Pāli*-records, some with complete, some with a more or less modified independence, and one or two of a very considerable power. Buddhist literature is full of glory for the *Śākyas*. Therefore, we may examine the constitutional structure of the *Śākyas* first and the other republics later.

The Republic of the Śākyas:

Location: "An Aryan tribe," writes Prof. R. Davids, "named the *Śākyas*, were seated at a place called *Kapilavastu*, on the banks of the river *Rohini*.......that insignificant stream rose thirty or forty miles to the north of their settlement, in the spurs of the mighty Himālayas, whose giant peaks

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loomed up in the distance against the clean blue of the Indian sky."[4]

Geographical conditions and Agricultural products:

Between tall forests of *Śāl* trees yellow rice-fields spread out in uniform richness. The rice-plant, which the Buddhist texts here mention, constitutes today, as in ancient times, the chief crop of this country, where the water of the rainy season and of inundations remains long standing on the rich soil of the low lying flats, and renders in great measure, superfluous that excessively troublesome artificial irrigation which is elsewhere necessary for rice. Between the rice fields, we may "here and there place villages in the days of *Śākyas* such as exist today, hidden among the rich, dark green foliage of mangoes and tamarinds which surrounds the village site. In the background of the picture, over the black masses of the mountains of Nepal rise the towering snow-capped summits of the Himalayas."[5]

This beautiful description of the small republic of the days of yore greatly helps us to imagine its secured geographical position and rich natural resources which gave it the opportunity to practise republican ways of life in peaceful environment. True democratic conditions can be created and stabilised when a state has the necessary resources to make itself self-sufficient, economically, as well as politically. Such a state can avoid possibilities of frequent warfare and can also develop friendly relations with larger states. Switzerland is the solitary mountain republic of our age which has preserved successfully, its independence, neutrality and democratic conditions, so far, because of similar reasons.

Extent of the Śākyan territory:

From the description of the natural setting of the *Śākyan* republic, it is clear that it was conveniently situated on the mountain slopes, just on the borders of Nepalese and Indian territory, "as is now finally settled by the recent discoveries of the *tope* or burial mound put up by the *Śākyas* over the portion they retained of the relics from the Buddha's funeral pyre, and of Aśoka's inscription, *in situ,* recording this visit to the Lumbini garden in which the Buddha was born."[6] The names of the most important townships mentioned in the ancient texts are to be found perhaps under the numerous ruins in the immediate vicinity of these discoveries. Kapilavastu was the chief town of the republic and the others were *Catuma, Samagāma, Khomadussa, Silavati, Metalupa, Ulumpa, Sakkara,* and *Devadaha.* Besides these important townships, there were numerous villages of whose local administration we hear much in the accounts of Prof. Rhys Davids. He says, "it was no doubt in this plain, stretching about fifty miles from east to west, and thirty or forty miles to the southward from the foot of Himalaya Hills, that the majority of the clan were resident of,.... The villages were grouped round the rice fields, and the cattle wandered through the outlying forest, over which the peasantry, all *Śākyas* by birth had rights of common."[7] The existence of so considerable a number of market towns and neighbouring villages round the rice-fields implies that it was mainly an agricultural community.

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[4] Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, Ch. II. p. 25.

[5] Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order.* Ch. II. p. 97.

Though it seems that the people of this community subsisted on the produce of their rice-field and their cattle, there were artisans in each village, probably not *Śākyas* who formed an important section of the village population. Within the bounds of the republic were men of certain trades of a higher standing, the carpenters, smiths and potters, who had villages of their own. The *Brahmins* had also their own position in the village life, whose services were in demand at every domestic ritual. *Khomadussa* was a name of a *Brahmin* settlement. The absence of the mention of a merchants' class or bankers', such as were found in the neighbouring kingdoms, is a remarkable thing. It seems that the producers did not depend upon any middlemen for the sale of their produce.

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[6] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India,* p. 10.

[7] *Ibid.,* Ch. II. p. 12.

This mixed population of the republic was headed by a *Kshtriya* community called the *Śākyas.* It may be referred as the aristocratic community, which enjoyed superior political rights, because of their distinction in the art of state-craft.

Nature and Type of the State :

A widespread tradition represents Buddha as having been a *Śākya* king's son. The controversy over the *Śākyas* being a king-ship or a non-monarchical state is very ably solved by Prof. Oldenberg. He writes on the basis of the authority of *Cullavagga* and passages from *Sonadanda-sutta,* at the head of this aristocratic community, there must certainly have been some one leading man, appointed, we know not by what rules, with the title of king, which can scarcely in this case have indicated more than the position of *primus-inter-pares.* But the idea that the Buddha's father Sudhodhana enjoyed this royal dignity is quite foreign to the oldest forms in which the traditions regarding the family are presented to us, rather we have nothing more or less to contemplate in Sudhodhana than one of the great and wealthy land owners of the Śākya race, whom later legends first transformed into the 'great king Sudhodhana'.[8] *Vinaya pitaka* also narrates in one incident of Gautama's life that Sudhodhana, the chief of the *Śākyas,* had sent invitation to the Buddha to visit *Kapilvastu.*[9]

Śākyan Population :

Buddhaghosa has left an old traditional number of these Śākya families by counting the relatives on the Buddha's father's side as well as on the side of his mother. The tradition says that the Buddha had eighty thousand families on each side. Prof. Rhys Davids allows each family a strength of six or seven members, which makes a total of about a million persons in the Śākya territory. Though the figure is purely traditional and also influenced by the mystic value usually attached to the number, it is perhaps suggestive of a considerably large portion of the population what we might expect.

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[8] Hermann Oldenberg, *Buddha,* Ch. II. p. 99.

[9] Vinayapitaka, *Mahāvagga pāli,* Ch. I. p. 86. Mahākhandaka. (Nālandā Devanāgari Pāli Series)

Śākyas a sovereign republic :

The *Śākyas* were a sovereign republic under the governing authority of a superior or aristocratic class of people, extending equal opportunities to the other classes of artisans and creating thereby a harmony in the state-life. The *Śākya*s were not a vassal state under any kingdom. There is no dearth of evidence and powerful arguments to establish this fact. Devadatta the opponent of Gautama Buddha who was also born amongst the *Śākyas*, had become unpopular amidst his own people and when left alone in desolation, lamented that he was renounced by all the kings of the *Śākyas*.[10] This proves that the *Śākyan* kings had the sovereign authority to take decisions against the acts of individuals. By a second instance it is proved that they could also decide collectively, a policy towards another free state.

In the second incident, we read that king Prasenjit sends his messenger asking for one of the daughters of the *Śākyas* in marriage. On receipt of this message the *Śākyas* gathered together and deliberated how the proposal could be averted.[11] These two incidents also help in establishing the fact that the *Śākya* kings were not monarchs in the ordinary sense of the term. They were merely title-holders. Dr. R. C. Majumdar observes, "according to time-honoured customs ambassadors are despatched by one king to another if there be any, and the omission in this respect seems to lend considerable strength to the assumption that *Śākyas* had no king in the sense which we attach to the term." In the end Dr. Majumdar writes, "The above references seem to me to be conclusive evidence in favour of Prof. Rhys Davids' theory that the *Śākyas* had a non-monarchical constitution."[12]

Śākyas were no more a clan :

Śākyas, Licchavis, Koliyas and the other republican states have, however, been called as "clans" by Prof. Rhys Davids,

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[10] *Samudda-Vanijja-Jātaka*, No. 466. IV. 158.

[11] *Bhadda sala-Jātaka*, No. 465. IV. 144 pp.

[12] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, Ch. III. p. 238.

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which seems out of place because their political organization shows that they had advanced much ahead of clanish life. Dr. K. P. Jayaswal writes, "In view of the results of a special study of the republican organization, I differ from that great scholar (meaning R. Davids) when he calls them 'clans'. The evidence does not warrant our calling them 'clans'. Indian republics of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. as we shall see in sequence had long passed the tribal stage of society. They were states, *gaṇas,* and *saṁghas* though many of them very likely had a national or tribal basis, as every state ancient or modern must necessarily have."[13]

The Śākyan state and government :

The state of the *Śākyas* was of republican form with an aristocratic government.[14] We find indeed in the 6th century before Christ, in the valley of the Ganges, a stage of social evolution very similar to that reached in Greece at the time of Plato. The country was politically split up into small communities governed under republican institutions., some aristocratic and some more democratic in character. The *Śākyas* were one of them.

The Śākyan Assembly :

This small aristocratic republic was governed by an assembly. The *kshatriya* community known as *Śākyas* and distinguished for their attainments in the sphere of education, culture and state craft, were entitled to form the national assembly. Their assembly was known as *Saṇthāgāra* which has also been referred to as *Śākya Parishada.* We hear of a new building of the *Saṇthāgāra* which was inaugurated by series of discourses by the Blessed one himself, Ānanda and Moggallana.[15]

Membership :

The *Śākyan Saṇthāgāra* was an open hall, a roof supported by pillars, accommodating 500 members, the old and the young,

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[13] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VI. p. 44.

[14] Rhys Davids, *History and Literature of Buddhism,* Lect. III. p. 61.

[15] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India,* Ch. II. pp. 11-12.

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from the distinguished *Śākyan* families. These five hundred members must have been selected on a proportional basis as to represent the *Śākyan* families of *Kapilvastu.*

Qualifications of the members :

Among the necessary qualifications of the members, special importance was given to high education. Education again was taken in a comprehensive sense. It included, besides academic qualifications, a complete training in all *śilpas* or crafts. A father would not marry his daughter to an uneducated bridegroom. In the *Lalitavistara* we find an episode from the life of Gautama himself. The father of the girl Gopa, in reply to a proposal of her marriage with young Gautama stated that, he could not make over the girl to a prince reared at home, among luxuries and ignorant of the *śilpas* and the military arts.[16] According to the records in Buddhist literature, Gautama had to compete in a tournament of 500 youths for the hand of his bride.

In order to maintain this high standard of culture and purity of blood the *Śākyas* did not marry their girls outside their own class of people. An interesting event is recorded in the twelfth book of *Bhadda-śāla Jātaka.* The crown prince of *Kośala* had proposed to marry a *Śākya* girl. The *Śākya* elders sent the daughter of *Mahānāma Śākya* by a slave girl named *Nāgamunda,* instead of a girl of pure *Śākyan* blood. As a result they had to witness the sacking of their city at a later period.

The Elders :

We hear of the *Śākya*-elders, who decided the major policies under the chairmanship of the *Rājā* or the President of the state. This smaller organ functioned as the executive branch of the government. But the absence of a detailed enumeration of its functions makes it clear that its authority was subjected to that of the National Assembly.

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[16] *Lalitavistara,* Text, No. 1. Ch. 12. p. 99.

R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India,* Ch. VII. p. 110.

The size of the Executive organ :

The size of the executive organ varied from one republic to another. In some it consisted of four members and in the league of the *Licchavis* and *Videhas*, there were eighteen.

The President :

The President of the assembly who was selected or elected from amongst the members thereof, occupied the presidential chair of the assembly when it was in session and was considered as the head of the state when it was not. He was designated as *rājā*. Prof. Rhys Davids however considers the designation of a *rājā* as not equivalent to king. He writes, "even *rājā* is not necessarily the same as king in English. It means 'ruler' and may well have no stronger significance than that of 'Archon' or 'Consul'.[17]

Other officers of the Assembly :

This chief was not a permanent officer in any case because we hear at one time that Bhaddiya, a young cousin of Gautama was *Rājā*, at another that the Buddha's father Sudhodhana, elsewhere spoken as a simple clans man, Sudhodhana the *Śākyan*, held that rank. Besides the president, there were other officers of the assembly who assisted him in conducting the sessions. There used to be a special officer, who allotted seats to the members according to their seniority, known as *Āsanprajñāpaka*. Another officer was known as *gaṇa-puraka*, who acted as the chief-whip of the house. Lastly, there used to be the clerks of the house who acted as recorders of the procedures.

Other Assembly Halls :

We hear of mote-halls in almost every town and village, other than the capital, for their local administration. These halls were used for the general assembly purpose as well as for the purpose of discussing matters concerning local administration. The local affairs were deliberated upon in open assemblies of the house holders, held in the shady groves which then as now, formed so distinctive a feature in the long and level alluvial soil.

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[17] Rhys Davids, *History and Literature of Buddhism*, Lect. III. p. 61,

Powers and Functions of the Saṇthāgāra :

A general meeting place: The National Assembly was, firstly the general meeting place of the city where all matters of general interest were discussed. It was at such a parliament or palaver that king Prasenjita's proposition was discussed; when Ambaṭṭha goes to Kapilavastu on business, he goes to the mote-hall where the *Śākyas* were then in session. And it is to the Mote-Hall of the *Mallas* that Ānanda goes to announce the passing away of the Buddha.

A Legislative organ: The Assembly was the supreme law-making authority which could formulate laws regarding any aspect of public life, provided they were in conformity with the laws already established in the society. This implies again that the republican communities recognized the 'Law of the Land' which could not be abrogated by any enactment even of the supreme political authority of the state.

"Evidence of Buddhist literature shows", that the legislative assemblies, "Controlled foreign affairs, entertained ambassadors and foreign princes, considered their proposals and decided the momentous issues of peace and war."[18] The members of the assembly made speeches from their seats and the minutes of the meeting were kept by the clerks of the House.[19] Gautama Buddha adopted almost the same methods in his religious *saṁgha*. The procedures followed in the *saṁgha* assembly had their own characteristic features but in essentials they might be taken as identical with the procedures followed in its political counterpart. We read in the Buddhist scriptures about democratic ways of expediting complicated questions by majority vote or by referring them to specialized committees of the house. "For this feature is so essentially necessary for the successful working of an assembly and its utility, so obvious even to the common mind that, whether it had originated in a church or a political assembly, it was sure to have been copied by the one from the others."[20] Hence some important features of the popular assembly of a republican state may be gathered from the regulations relating to procedure laid down in the Buddhist scriptures.

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[18] A. S. Altekar, *'State and Govt.' in Ancient India,* Ch. VI. p. 117.

[19] Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha,* Pt. II (Sacred books of the Buddhists. Vol. III) pp. 263-264.

The terms popularly used for democratic processes :

As has already been referred, earlier in the present work, to the opinion of Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar[21] originally advanced by Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, that the Buddha while formulating rules of procedure for his religious *saṁgha* went on using certain terms like *Jñapti* for resolution, *Pratijña*, *'Karmavāchā'*, *'Yebhuyyūsikā'* meaning the vote of the majority, *'Śalākas'* meaning the voting tickets, *'Salākā-gahāpaka'* meaning one who collected the voting tickets, *'Chanda'* meaning an absentee vote and *'Gaṇa-Pūraka'* meaning the whip, usually sent to secure the necessary quorum.

These terms and the methods of procedure for which they were used, were in practice in the political *Saṁghas* also. The great Buddha was an apostle of democracy. He adopted democratic ideas in his system of monastic government and himself taught the *vajjians,* the distinguished federation of the *Videhas* of *Mithila* and *Licchavis* of *Veśāli,* the conditions under which they would prosper, and not decline. It is also worthy of note that he laid down the very same conditions for identical purposes and for the welfare of his own religious organization. It is obvious that he perceived the underlying similarity between the two constitutions, working in two different spheres of life and naturally looked upon both, as he set with the same sort of evils and weaknesses.

The Quorum of the House :

A quorum was made compulsory for any official undertaking for the obvious reason that all the members of the legislative organs, of the large strength of few hundreds, could never be present bodily in the meetings of the *Saṇthāgāra*. In order to keep upto the democratic principle, a quorum was, therefore, made necessary. No official matter could be deliberated upon or no policy could be decided without the quorum. The officers who acted as a whip to secure the quorum is described as the *Gaṇapuraka*.

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[20] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* Ch. III. p. 244.

[21] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Charmichael Lectures,* Ist Series, p. 184.

Legislative procedure; moving a resolution:

The sessions of the assembly were conducted by the president according to the rules already laid down. The agenda of the meeting used to be prepared beforehand and resolutions for bills used to be moved according to the rules of the house. The forms of resolutions and other rules regarding them, are found in the *Cullavagga*, which were also practised in the Buddhist church assembly.[22]

Debates:

After a resolution was read in the house, the members were supposed to give their opinions. A bill used to be read, generally, thrice. Before the third reading, opinions were to be brought forth. Every member had equal right to give his mind during the course of a debate. Sometimes the debates led to confusing and provocative situations. So much so that the house could not reach any conclusion. Under such circumstances, the bill had to be referred to a specialised committee.

Whenever there was a division of opinion about a bill moved in the house, its fate was decided by the majority vote. Usually resolutions were accepted by the house and passed unanimously. Members were expected to give their opinion before the third reading. If they kept silent at that time, it was taken for their consent.

There was provision for the representation of an absentee. In the case of unavoidable reasons, such as serious illness, a member could vote by proxy i.e. through his delegate.

Methods of Voting:

From the various methods of voting referred to in the

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[22] *Cullavagga*, IV. II. 2, XI. I. 4.

Buddhist texts we can anticipate that they were in practice in the republics. They were acquainted with open voting as well as secret ballot.[23] When in the religious assembly they voted secretly, they used to whisper into the ear of the collector of ballot-papers, *Śālākās,* the name of the candidate for whom they were voting. In the case of bills also they cast their votes as per rules laid down by the house.

Committee system :

When the fate of a bill could not be decided by majority vote, it was referred to a committee, appointed by the house itself. Sometimes the debates over a bill ended in a pandemonium, under such circumstances it was considered advisable to refer the matter to a select committee. This committee was called *Udvāhikā*. From ordinance no. 136 to 141, the *Vinaya Pitaka* has described the qualifications of the members to be co-opted in the committees and has also provided the method of their appointment. The instructions given in detail by the Buddha show, that he had the chance of witnessing such circumstances and knowing the methods of tackling them.

It will not be out of place to say that Gautama Buddha's democratic methods were none but those, which were in vogue in the republic he lived during the most impressionable part of his life. He had great admiration for the democratic ways of life and the republican institutions of the state. He transplanted both into his religious *saṁgha.*

Supremacy of the National Assembly :

The supremacy of the national Assembly and its advanced methods of functioning, leaves no room for doubt that the *Śākyas,* however small a republic they might have been, lived a highly organized political life and were fully conscious of the liberty and equality of the individual members.

Faith in the Aristocratic Leadership :

This small republic included within its pale people of different castes and vocations yet they stood as a homogeneous body. The common bondage was their sharp sense of responsibility to the state. They had faith and confidence in the leadership of the *Śākyas* who governed the state in partnership. This loyalty to the state invigorated in them the sense of willing co-operation and mutual trust leading to unity and solidarity. Their feeling of oneness protected them for a considerably long period, from the increasing power of the neighbouring monarchies.

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[23] *Cullavagga, Sativinaya,* pp. 153–158, Nālanda Devanāgarī Pāli Series.

The republics that figured eminently during the time of the Buddha had almost the same pattern of government, each with some features, characteristic of their own. We shall consider therefore the next republic of the *Licchavis.* Gautama Buddha visited a number of cities and villages of the republic of the *Licchavis.* Hence he was well acquainted with their political and social organization. In early Buddhist literature we come across discourses and events which throw much light upon the constitution and procedure of the republican governments of the Buddha's time. The early Buddhist records are therefore historical documents and in no sense a propaganda of ideas, that is why Havell says that "the administration of the Buddhist church was based entirely upon the republican political institutions of the Aryan communities which formed the foundation of one section of Indian polity."[24]

The Master had great admiration for the republic of the *Licchavis,* who were well known as a part of the *Vajjian* confederation. When we read the constitutional structure of the *Licchavis,* we find it in a special alliance with the *Videhas* at one time and with the *Mallas* at another. As a part of the league with the *Videhas* we find it governed by a federal council. The Buddha in his discourse with Ānanda, refers to the merits of the *Vajjis*[25] and again to the assembly of the *Licchavis* separately.[26]

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[24] E. B. Havell, *Aryan Rule in India,* p. 52.

[25] *Dīgha-nikāya* (Pt. 2 Mahavaggo), *Mahāparinibbana Suttanta,* pp. 58—60. Nālanda Devanāgari Pāli text series.

[26] Vide Dr. R. C. Majumdar's Quotation, in *Ancient India,* Ch. IV. p. 151.

The *Vajjians* as a confederation were a powerful state. The testimony of their power is found in the oft quoted dialogue in the *Mahāparinibban Sutta*. It says, once while the Buddha was at Rājgriha, Ajātaśatru, the Magadhan king sent his envoy Vāssakāra to the Master. Ajātśatru had a grim design of destroying the *Vajjians*. Before implementing his plans he wanted to know the opinion of the Blessed one. When the prime minister of Magadha approached him, the Buddha instead of replying to his question addressed his disciple Ānanda, "have you heard Ānanda that the *Vajjians* held full and frequent public assemblies?" "Lord, so I have heard," answered he.

The Buddha pointed out to them that *Magadha* could do them no harm as long as they would have the following seven qualities: collecting together frequently in their assemblies; mutual concord; regard for the ancient institutions of their clan; reverence for elders; protecting the prestige of the fair sex; honouring their shrines; arranging for the safe and convenient stay of the *Arhatas*. After Vāssakāra had gone away, the Buddha got the monks assembled in the service hall and delivered a discourse to them on the seven conditions of the welfare of a community, corresponding to the seven qualities of the *Vajjis*.[27]

This speech of the Buddha is like one given by the warrior philosopher Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata* regarding the characteristics of the *gaṇas*. In this discourse the Master has referred to the frequent meetings of the *Vajjian* assemblies which suggests that the republics had sovereign assemblies in their respective states. Besides their deliberative organs, they used to form federal councils to conduct federal matters. Such was the federal council of the *Licchavis* and the *Videhas*. The council formed by the *Licchavis* and the *Videhas* indicates that members of confederations were free to enter into special political relationship with any of the independent states, for we see that the *Licchavis* had formed a league with the *Mallas* at another time.

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27. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, *Introduction to (Mahavaggo) Dīghanikāya*, p. XII. Nālanda Devanāgāri Pāli series.

Federal Council of the Licchavis and Videhas :

The Federal Council consisted of eighteen members, nine from each of the two constituent units. Its main function was to supervise the common affairs of the *Licchavis* and the *Videhas.* It decided policies perhaps, that would enhance the general welfare of the league. Reference to the exclusive functions of the federal council is rare in the Buddhist literature. Therefore we can presume that it performed the duties of an executive organ. Its size and importance put it in a convenient position to take up action promptly, regarding matters which could not possibly be decided by the larger assemblies.

The Licchavis :

The republic of the *Licchavis* marks an important place in the history of the sixth century B.C. Like the *Śākyas,* the *Licchavis* had presented to the world a great religious leader of India. Mahāvīra the *Jīn* was born amongst them. "He grew up in the environment of royal atmosphere tempered with healthy influence of a republican character. His maternal relations were practically all of them ruling princes but his father Sidhārtha was a republican chief and even his maternal uncle was a territorial ruler under the auspices of a republican confederacy known as the *Vajjian* confederacy. Of its constituent republics, *Licchavis* were an eminent one, some of the others being the *Videhas,* the *Jñatṛkas* and the *Vajjis.*[28]

Characteristics of a Republican People :

From the discourse in *Mahāparinibbān-sutta,* delivered by the Buddha, we understand that the leaders of the time of the Buddha and Mahāvīra considered, as to a large extent today, that the strength of the republic lies not, so much in its government as in the character of its people. It is mentioned in the discourse, that republican population was free from luxury and sloth, "Sleeping on logs of wood as pillows and not cushions of the finest cotton, active in archery, and not delicate, tender and soft in their arms and legs." The youths were rowdy but by no means devoid of honour or lacking in moral courage, they frankly admitted their mistakes and were inspired by a fundamental sense of respect for elders and women, and their national institutions.[29]

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[28] B. C. Law, *Mahāvīra, his life and teachings,* p. 26.

It was in this atmosphere that Mahāvīra spent his early life. He was deeply influenced by the democratic ethos of the society, and he took it upon himself to work out and propagate a system of complete spiritual democracy in the form of Jainism.

Location of the Licchavis:

The *Licchavis* were a republic with their capital at *Vaiśāli*, which was situated in the district of modern Muzaffarpur in Bihar called Basaḍh.[30] This republic together with seven other republics formed into a confederation which was known as the *Vajjian* confederation.

Of the eight confederate units, the *Licchavis* and the *Videhas* were the most important. Vaiśālī, the capital of the *Licchavis* was the headquarters of the powerful *Vajjian* confederacy, afterwards defeated but not broken up by *Ajātśatru*. "It was the only great city in all the territories of the free clans who formed so important a factor in the social and political life of the sixth century B.C."[31] Prof. Rhys Davids is however, not certain about the location generally attributed to this great city. He guessed, "It was somewhere in Tirhut; and just three leagues, or say, twenty five miles, north of the Ganges, reckoned from a spot on the bank of that river, five leagues, say thirty eight miles from Rājagaha."

Dr. Jayaswal gives us the indication of the correct location on the basis of later excavations. The *Licchavis* confederated with the *Mallas* at one time, "who covered a large area to the south of the *Śākyas* and east of the *Vṛjis*, from the district of Gorakhpur to that of Champaran, divided into two units, with their capitals at Kuśinagara and at Pāvā."[32] The *Mallas* and the *Vṛjīs* had attained political importance due to their membership of the renowned confederation.

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[30] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. VI. p. 42.

[31] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, Ch. II. p. 25.

[32] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. VI. p. 43.

In *Dīgha–Nikāya* we hear the Buddha saying that so long as *Vajjians* "would assemble repeatedly and in large numbers, just so long their prosperity might be looked for and not their decay."[33] About the form of government of the *Vajjian* confederacy we have two traditions, Jains and the Buddhist. Buddhist literature supplies us with detailed informations about the constitutional structure of the *Licchavis*. *Ekapanna Jātaka* (No. 149, 1) informs us that the *Licchavis* had 7707 *rājās* and a similar number of *uparājās* and *senāpatīs* at their capital *Vaiśāli*. These *rājās*, duly consecrated, governed the state. Each *rājā* might have formed his small staff with one *uparājā*, one *senāpati* and a *Bhandāgārika*. The number, 7707, may not be taken literally because it might be a traditional number but it indicates that the governing body of the *Licchavis* was a numerous one.

According to Dr. U. N. Ghoshal, the *Senāpatis* can be taken to be the executive authorities put over the assemblies of the respective states.[34] He quotes the narrative of the biographies of the *Senāpati* Khanda and the courtesan Āmrapāli in the *Vinaya* work of the *Mūlasarvātivādin* school which, he says, illustrates the actual working of the *Licchavi* constitution. Khanda, formerly the chief minister of the king of *Videha*, was driven by the unjust suspicion of his master, to seek an asylum in *Vaiśāli*. He became a citizen of *Vaiśāli* at a later stage and gradually by sheer dint of merit he attained to the office of the *Senāpati* of the *Licchavi* assembly. Under his advice the *Licchavis* began to pitch their written communications in mild instead of harsh language as before. After Khanda's death the *Gaṇa* elected his younger son Simha instead of his older son Gopa for the office of the *Senāpati*. The resulting change is indicated by the fact that the writs of the *Vaiśālians* were issued formerly in the name of the *gaṇa*

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[33] *Dīgha-Nikāya*, II, pp. 58–60 (Nālanda Devanāgari Māhaparinibbana-suttanta, Pāli-series).

[34] U. N. Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian history and culture*, pp. 388-89. Narrative of Khanda and his son Siṁha.

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headed by Khanda, they now began to be issued in the name of the *gaṇa* with Simha at its head.

If we try to understand the nature of the *Licchavi* constitution in the context of the above reference, we can take the large number of *Senāpatis,* referred to in the *Jātaka* stories, to be the executive heads selected out of the members of the *saṇthagāras,* of the smaller administrative and political divisions of the *Licchavi* republic. These *Senāpatis* were supposed to represent perhaps, their assemblies, in the central government at *Vaiśāli.* It is not an untenable idea because we find in our present constitution the Rajya-sabha, a similar organ in the union government, representing the state legislatures and also consisting of the few nominated members. "It appears that the whole state was divided into a number of small administrative units, each of which was a state in miniature by itself and possessed a complete machinery for carrying on the local administration."[35]

The Licchavis were a federal republic :

We can not hold the *Jātaka* stories at a discount nor can we overlook the informations given in the early *Pāli* canons. By bringing the two together we come to the conclusion that the *Licchavi* constitution was a federal republic consisting of independent units, with their assemblies, headed by the *senāpatis* as executive authorities. However "cumbrous" the constitution may look or whatever "disruptive tendencies" might be there, one would not fail to note the strong republican trends in the political system. The definite sign of it is the full right of the sovereignty of the *gaṇa* over the community. though it pursued the enlightened policy of allowing full political rights to distinguished *emigres.*

The assembly of the Licchavis :

We see that the *Vajjian* constitution on the whole was looked upon with favour and the assembly of the *Licchavis* extorted special admiration of the Buddha. Referring to the *Licchavi*

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35. R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India,* Ch. IV. p. 157.

Assembly he said, "O brethren, let those of the brethren who have never seen the *Tāvatiṁsa* gods, gaze upon this assembly of the *Licchavis,* behold this assembly of the *Licchavis* even as an assembly of *Tāvatiṁsa* Gods."

Membership of the assembly:

The introductory episodes of the *Jātaka* stories inform us about the assembly. We learn from them that in the city of *Vaiśāli,* "there were always seven thousand seven hundred seven kings to govern the kingdom and a like number of *Uparājās* (Deputy chiefs), *Senāpatis* (generals) and *Bhandāgārikas* (*treasurers*)."[36] In another *Jātaka* story we are furnished with some more details, "tradition says that the *Licchavis* of the ruling family to the number of seven thousand seven hundred and seven had their abode at *Vaiśāli* and all of them were given to argument and disputation."[37] The quaint remark that the members were all given to argument and disputation, seem to prove that the popular assembly was not merely a formal part of the constitution, but had active, vigorous life and wielded real authority in the state.

These 7707 members of the assembly were all given the same political and social status by attributing to each, the title of *Rājā* by a custom of consecration. It is said that the *Vaiśālians* who were consecrated to rulership by sprinkling sacred water on them would only be entitled to become the members of the assembly,[38] and it is said in the *Lalitavistara* that none of these *Rājās* were superior or inferior to each other.[39]

The President and the other officers:

It seems that the 7707 *rājās* chose from amongst themselves, a president, a vice-president (*Upa-rājā*) and the Generalissimo

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[36] *Ekpanna Jātaka*, No. 149, 1, 504.

[37] *Chullakalinga Jātaka*, No. 301, III. I.

[38] "*Veśāli nagare jana-rājā kulānām-abhiṣeka-mangala pokkhariṇi*" *Jātaka*, IV, 148.

[39] "*Nocha-mādhya-vriddha-jyesshtthānupalitā, ekaika eva manyate ahaṁ rājā ahaṁ rajeti, nachakasyachi-cchiśya, twaṁupagacchati*, *Lalitavistara*, Ch. III. p. 21.

(*Senāpati*). The constitution of the *Licchavis* has been detailed in the *Aṭṭhakatha,* a later document. The office of the chancellor of exchequer *Bhandāgārika,* has also been mentioned in the *Jātakas.*

The Cabinet:

We can easily anticipate that the four highest office-holders composed the cabinet or the executive organ. These officers were the choice of the assembly hence were responsible to it. These four officers were the highest authorities in the republican executive which "was a body of eight (*aṣṭa-kula*) or nine. The council of nine was in charge of foreign affairs and the council of eight, of justice."[40] This system of executive is in keeping with the ideal of a republican state. For the purpose of secrecy of confidential matters and promptness in execution of policies, a smaller organ is desirable and preferable even to-day, but in all cases it should be responsible to the general assembly.

The opening of the assembly:

In Buddhist literature, the general assembly has also been referred to as the 'House of Law'. The members of this house discussed not only matters of political and military interest but also problems concerning agriculture and commerce. The house opened its sessions with the President in the chair. It appointed one of its senior and distinguished members as *Mahāṭṭaka* or the envoy, charging him to deliver a message, on behalf of the *Licchavis* of *Vaiśāli* i.e. the house would swear that it would act strictly, according to the sovereign will of the people. The message preceded by this promise, reminded the house that it was to rule with moderation so that its acts did not hurt the sentiments of the common man.

The President; His Powers and Functions:

Legislative powers: Like the president of the *Śākyan* republic, the president of the *Licchavis* was the head of the state.

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[40] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India,* p. 109.

He wielded his executive powers in the capacity of the executive head. But he was to conduct the meetings of the assembly when it was in session. He presided over the meetings and saw that its proceedings followed the rules already laid down.

Judicial powers: Besides being the executive head of the state and the president of the legislative assembly, the president enjoyed certain judicial powers. In the judicial system of the *Licchavis,* the president was the court of the last resort. Like the president of our democratic republic, he had the right of hearing the final appeal of a citizen charged by law. The president exercised his judicial authority with the aid of a law minister.

The Law Minister: The law minister, like other officers used to be a *Vaiśālian*. But he could be selected from amongst the outsiders also and could be appointed as a paid officer. The main consideration for this office was the merit of the person and not his residence. The law minister used to advise and help the president in exercising his judicial powers.

The Judiciary of the Licchavis: The *Licchavis* distinguished themselves for the ultra-democratic spirit of their judicial organization. It was a single hierarchical system, consisting of seven successive tribunals. The *Aṭṭhakatha* informs us that a citizen had the right to appeal to the highest court through the successive tribunals and he was punishable if all the tribunals agreed over the decision. If all but one of them dissented, the person charged, could be released. If all the tribunals found him guilty, even then the appellant could depend upon the members of the executive authorities for his acquittal. Thus a *Vaiśālian* was guaranteed the right of justice in the true sense of the term.

The above system of justice is criticised by Dr. U. N. Ghoshal as a "Cumbrous procedure....providing ample loopholes for the escape of criminals from the hand of justice, would be attended with grave risk of abuse of liberty of the subject."[41] To my mind, all democratic institutions are open to such criticisms. Their success depends upon the holders of the offices, their sense of justice and power of discrimination, but in no case we can fail to notice the highly democratic institution that developed in the *Licchavi judiciary*.

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[41] U. N. Ghoshal, *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, pp. 386-87.

The chain of courts:

The courts which functioned at the seven stages were as follows :

1. *Vinichchaya Mahāmatta* = Court of preliminary enquiry.
2. *Vohārika* = Court of lawyer judges, (a court of appeal).
3. *Sutta-dharas* = The high court of the doctors of law.
4. *Aṭṭhakulaka* (*Ashtakulaka*) = A court of eight judges, a court of final appeal.

After these courts were the members of the Executive. They were :

5. *The Senāpati*, 6. *The Uparājā*, and 7. *The Rājā*.

Paveni-Pustaka—the Guide book:

The president was thus the court of final appeal. The president sought guidance of the *Paveni-Pustaka,* which was the book of precedents, the record of "the decisions of the president on the 'rolls' in which the particulars of crime and punishment awarded to the citizens found guilty, were entered. All criminal cases had to go through this hierarchy of courts.

In this judicial organization we see an attempt of the *Vaiśālians* to keep their political organization up to the general principles of a republic. In the *Mahābhārata* also we find the same procedure suggested as ideal for criminal justice. The author of the *Mahābhārata* says, criminal justice in a republic should be administered by experts through the president.[42] The *Licchavis* were powerful due to their firm internal organization but they were not at peaceful and cordial relations with the growing power of Magadha in the neighbourhood, and Magadha was the deadly rival of Kośala. The *Vaiśālians* had already lost one great battle with Ajātśatru. They naturally preferred to form leagues as a measure of attack from the monarchical powers, between whom they were situated.

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[42] *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva; Ch. 107. Sl. 27.

Liberalism of the Licchavis:

It is alleged against the *Licchavis* and the *Śākyas* that they were particularly careful about offering high offices to their own clansmen. No outsider could attain offices of political or administrative importance. But the instance of Khanda proves that the feeling for their clans-men was not so strong as it is depricted to be. They on the other hand cared a little too much for high calibre. Khanda, the chief *amātya* of the king of Videha, left his own state and sought for permission to obtain citizenship of Vaiśāli. He was granted the same. Not only that, Khanda could attain the highest office of the *Senāpati* by dint of his own merit. On his demise the office of the *Senāpati* was offered to his younger son instead of the elder one. The younger son raised the claim of his elder brother. The assembly replied that, it was not a hereditary office. The choice of the assembly fell upon him, if he was not keen to accept, it could be offered to some other family.

A courtesan like Āmrapāli was also assigned residence in the highest quarters of Vaiśāli, shows the flexibility of the social rules. But according to the normal social arrangements, there persisted social grades on the basis of wealth and position.[43]

It is also remarked that the assembly consisting of the *Vaiśālians* alone and functioning in the name of the *Vaiśālian* citizens only, was a government for Vaiśāli. It was natural because the republic of the *Licchavis* was a federal republic. Each and every part of the republic had its own assembly house. Thus we hear of the village assemblies and the town assemblies, which had powers to conduct their respective problems, independent of central control. On the same principle, the *Vaiśālians* had their representatives in the assembly of the capital city. This city-assembly, besides being the assembly of the *Vaiśālians*, was also the national assembly, to conduct all matters of the republic as a whole.

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[43] R. C. Majumdar, On *"Historical Material in Gilgit Manuscripts,"* in B. C. Law, Vol. Pt. I. pp. 139-40.

Ajātśātru was anxious to annihilate this powerful republic. He had been making designs since long. He had started making fortresses and roads which would ease the control of forces in action against the *Licchavis*. He "had to take recourse to the nefarious means of breaking the *Licchavis*' Republican unity by sowing seeds of dissension among the people. Minister Vāssakāra was at this job for three years, living with them at Vaiśāli. The unity of the *Licchavis* was broken by a new spirit of jealousy between rich and poor, strong and weak (Dialogues, II. 78). When the actual invasion of the territory of the *Licchavis* commenced, they began to argue, 'Let the strong *Licchavis* go forward and crush the enemy,' instead of fighting to a man in defence of their national freedom."[44]

Thus we come across an instance where a great republic fell a prey of the mean designs of a power seeking monarch. The *Licchavis* had to endure a war with the *Magadhan* power for sixteen long years. This war had shaken the republic to the roots. Gradually its power faded away and it lost its political significance as a republic.

Other Republics:

Detailed informations about the constitutional structure of the other republics mentioned in the list of Prof. Rhys Davids, are not available. From the silence of the Buddhist literature about them, we can anticipate that they, perhaps, had the same pattern of constitution. Mote-halls were common amongst all republican states where all matters of public interest were discussed. In such a session of the mote-hall of the *Mallas*, Ānanda had announced the death of the Buddha, and the elders of the Mallas had deliberated over the arrangements of the last rites of the Master.

The Mallas :

The *Mallas* were known in the annals of Buddhism as a powerful and warring community. Their two sections, at *Kuśināra* and at *Pāva,* were independent republican communities, who covered a large area to the south of the *Śākyas* and east of the *Vṛjis,* from the district of Gorakhpur to that of modern Champaran.[45] Prof. Rhys Davids says that each of these small communities had a set of subordinate staff like the peons or police working in the republic of the *Koliyas.* This civilian staff looked after the local administration.[46]

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[44] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India*, p. 103.

The central legislative and executive organs conducted the matters of the state. No special mention of their legislative or executive organs is found in the literature available.

Strong partisan feeling :

Party factionalism was strong among the *Mallas.* We hear of nine *Malla* groups, who demanded for their share of the relics of the Buddha after his death.

The Koliyas :

The *Koliyas* are mentioned in the list of republics, along with the *Mallas* and, *Videhas* and other smaller states. Their republican organization must have been of the pattern that prevailed in the others. We find a special mention of the body of staff serving the central authorities. They looked after the local administration. They were distinguished by a kind of uniform, from which they took their name, by a special head dress. These particular men had a bad reputation for extortion and violence.

The Videhas :

According to tradition, *Videha* was a kingdom in earlier times but it is described as a republic during the time of the Buddha. The *Videhas* were renowned as the counterpart of the famous *Licchavis.* Its size as a separate state was three hundred leagues (about twenty three hundred miles) in circumference. Its capital Mithila was about thirtyfive miles north-west of Vaiśāli where ruled king Janaka before the rise of Buddhism. The city of Janakpur was perhaps named after him.

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[45] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 43.

[46] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India,* p. 13,

Federal Council:

We have said earlier, how the *Videhas* and the *Licchavis* were governed by the Federal Council consisting of nine representatives from each constituent unit. The citizens of *Videha* enjoyed equality in the political sphere. About the *Videhan* assembly and judicial system, we have no specific information. There were some other republics also whose names exist but detailed records of their political life are missing.

One thing is worth mention here that the age of the Buddha was the age of the rise of *Saṁgha* polity. Republican trends were found not only in the urban institutions but the trends extended far and wide, down to the village level. Every village was a self-governing unit with its own *Santhāgār*.

Village Republic :

Village was the smallest administrative unit of the state fabric. It was ruled over by the headman (*grāmaṇi*), chosen by the villagers, together with a number of assistants to help him. They administered jointly, small civil and criminal suits, and did all benevolent work for the local unit. The village headmen were often consulted by the king in the monarchies. We hear of the story of *Seniyo Bimbisāra* consulting eighty thousand *grāma*-leaders.[47] Villages sometimes joined together and functioned as self-governing federations.

Village economy:

The village economy also was based on republican principles. The descriptions of their collective land-holding and collective farming enables us to compare them with the most advanced conditions of the villages of our own times.[48] Even during the rule of Chandra Gupta Maurya we notice the republican trends persisting in village life. The great Maurya Emperor had not touched the "Society functioning apart from the state proper as a separate entity. Rural politics remained independent as ever, of state politics and of the vicissitudes of political fortune affecting the state or the sovereign at the top. Ancient India was thus built up as a vast rural democracy.[49]

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[47] N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, Pt. I. p. 238.

[48] Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 28-29.

Success of republicanism in villages :

Villagers were happy under their headmen because they were their own chosen heads. Life of the Indian villagers, like the citizens of ancient Greece "was a unity, for they had not yet learned to disentangle their soul from the soul of their village republic or the herd."[50] The villagers were keener for equality on the well-sides than in the government offices. They cared more for freedom in their own particular vocation than in the entire economy. Thus we see that the entire life, in the country or the town, was seething with the republican spirit during the time of Gautama Buddha.

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[49] R. K. Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*, pp. 47-48.

[50] A. E. Zimmern, *Political Thought*, p. 330.

CHAPTER V

POST BUDDHA PERIOD

(c. 500–2nd *c.* B.C.)

To know the republics of ancient India as living entities we had to probe through the concept and to know them as working realities we have to examine the concrete, i.e., the constitutional structure of the *Saṁghas*. Noted Indologists have traced the republican trends in the *Sabhās* and *Samitis* of the Vedic age though monarchy was the accepted form of state.

Besides monarchy, the growth of pure republican polity can be traced sporadically in north-eastern as well as the north-western region of India, since the time of the Buddha. The period that immediately follows the age of the Buddha, is the period of the eminent grammarian Pāṇini. *Aṣṭādhyāi* is his monumental work which records the names of republics, going in a procession of graded and classified groups. These groups had not attained the same standard of political advancement, yet they were all classed under *Saṁgha* polity.

The age of Pāṇini :

Pāṇini has recorded the names of the largest as well as the minutest republican organization; *janapadas* which reached the peak of prominence and prosperity and also those which were still trotting along the elementary lines of republicanism. The trend in these various states was common but the development of political institutions was not uniform.

Pāṇini's account is most reliable because his references to political and social conditions of his time are incidental and not intentional. His account is important because it records names of numerous non-monarchical states, but neither Pāṇini's *sūtras* nor the *Ganapaṭha* nor even Kātyāyana's commentary leave open a window to peep into the constitutional structure of these states. The reason is obvious. Pāṇini being a grammarian took special care to the writing of the grammar and

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made his book richer by adding the informations about the geographical, social and political conditions of the lands he travelled through. Yet he shows his power of keen observation by specifying the groups of martial tribes who occupied the *Vāhika* countries of the Punjab.

The Āyudhajīvins :

These warrior-classes were known as the *Āyudhajīvins*. They were mostly *Kshatriyas*.[1] Three such groups of *Āyudhajīvins* lived as self-governing people. They were the *Dāmanyādi, Pārsavadi* and the *Yayudheyadi*. The *Dāmanyadi* group consisted of ten *gaṇas* whose names also occur in the *Kaśika*. Out of these ten *gaṇas*, one or two, such as *Sarvaseni* and *Sāvitriputras* have figured in other eminent works also. *Sāvitriputras, Kshudrakas* and *Yaudheyas* have been mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*,[2] many of whose brave warriors had been slain by the Pandavas. *Kāśika* counts *Sarvaseni* amongst the three rainless areas.

The Pārsavādi gaṇas :

The second group of *Āyudhajīvī gaṇas* is called *Pārsavādi*[3] which includes twelve names which are common to both the commentaries, *Chandra* and *Kāśika*. Patanjali has mentioned under the same group, names of certain people who were not full republics. They were the tribes, *Parsu, Rākshas* and *Asuras*, who were half civilized people, still practising primitive methods of life, yet free from the rule of a single monarch. *Kāśika* therefore includes them in the second group of the *gaṇas*.

Some of the names mentioned in this group have been identified with some tribes living as independent organizations in the modern times also, e.g., the *Bāhlika*, identified with *Balis* in Baluchistan. Pāṇini has included another important *gaṇa* in the group of *Pārsavādi*. That *gaṇa* state is known as

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1. Pāṇinī, Sūtras, V. 3. 115–17.
2. *Mahābhārata*, Karṇaparva, V. Slokas, 46 to 48.
3. Pāṇini, Sūtra, V. 3. 117.

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'*Satvata*' and '*Dasarha*'. We hear of the same people to have formed a part of the '*Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi*' league of which Krishṇa was the president for sometime. Besides the names of the *gaṇas,* Pāṇini does not give us any further information. We come to know about the constitutional structure of the league, when we read *Mahābhārata.*

Yaudheyadi group :

Pāṇini has referred twice in his work, the names of *gaṇas* within the *Yaudheyadi* group. Of these various names nine are common in the two references. Therefore Dr. V. S. Agrawala is of the opinion that these nine should be taken as genuine states.[4] Some of them have been identified with those mentioned and described by the Greek writers. *Subhreya* is one instance which is referred by Pāṇini as *Subhrādibhyascha,* named as *Sabarcae* by Curtius Rufus and *Sabargre* by Orosius. The *Yaudheyas* though unnamed in the Greek accounts, and the *Kshudrakas,* were mentioned by Pāṇini, as free, independent republics, with well organized armed forces. The Greek descriptions say that the army of the *Kshudrakas* consisted of as large a number as that of 60,000 foot and 6,000 cavalry attended by 500 chariots. McCrindle tells us that the three generals of the three divisions of the army were elected officers on the basis of merit.[5] His translation of the original Greek accounts throws light upon the non-hereditary nature of the government which clearly distinguishes it from the monarchical state.

Pāṇini and the other authors like Kātyāyana and Patañjali have become conspicuous by their silence on the constitutional aspect of the melee of republics and half-republics that they have mentioned.[6] The nine *gaṇas* named by Pāṇini are not all full republics. Two, like *Darteya* and *Jyabaneya* remain even unidentified. Others like *Sankreya, Vārteya* and *Arbhata* were perhaps still in the tribal stage. Only a few, which had

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[4] V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini,* Ch. VII. p. 449.

[5] McCrindle, *Indian Invasion by Alexander,* p. 252.

[6] Even Kāśika does not give us any clue in this respect.

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passed through all the stages of political development and had reached the conditions of full republican state, survived the calamities of foreign invasion and attacks of the empire-builders. These were (1) *Trigarta Shaṣṭhas,* (2) *Bhārata gaṇa,* located by Pāṇini in the *Kuru* region on the borderland of the *Udichya* and *Prāchya* divisions of India. It seems that these *Bhāratas* lived around *Kurukshetra* as a *Saṁgha* in Pāṇini's time, and (3) the *Yaudheyas* as republic proper. The *Trigarta Shaṣṭhas* and the *Yaudheyas* have a long history and a reputation of well organized state activities.

Trigarta Shaṣṭha :

This was the league of six *trigartas. Trigarta* stands for six valleys of the three rivers, *Rāvi, Beas* and *Sutlej.* Trigarta represented a second cluster of mountainous *Saṁghas* being counted amongst *Parvatāsryiṇaḥ.* The Kāśika mentions the names of this confederacy as follows:[7]

> (1) Kannḍaparatha, (2) Daṇdaki, (3) Kraushtaki, (4) Jālmāni, (5) Brahmagupta and (6) Jānaki. The names of the Trigarta Shashṭha, given in Kāśika, are not supported by historical evidences or the evidence of coins or inscriptions. Therefore Dr. V. S. Agrawala's conclusion that "they are based on presumption"[8] is not erroneous.

Out of these, the *Yaudheyas* are the only republic who prove by the permanence of their political existence through the ages, that they had grown into a genuine republican state through the process of gradual advancement. The earliest reference to the *Yaudheyas* is found in Pāṇini's record of the political conditions of the north-western part of India.[9] This clan is referred to as a warrior clan whose existence is attested by Kautilya and as late as the time of Samudragupta and their coins bear the symbols of the military character of the clan.

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[7] V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini,* p. 445.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Pāṇini, Sūtras, V. 3. 117.

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Coin evidence :

The later evidences collected from the coins found in East Punjab, in the Rohtak District between the Sutlej and Yamuna rivers tell us that the *Yaudheyas* were a people who ruled themselves and the community was known by the name of the people and the state. The *Yaudheyas* elected their own president.

Their coins:

Their coins can be divided into three classes. Different legends are found in the coins of each class. These legends clearly show the stages of their political advancement.

Stages of political development:

The development of *Janapadas* generally started from the clan stage, known in the Greek history as *Genos*. The same term has been used by Pāṇini as *Jana* in Sanskrit language. The *Jana* or *Genos* developed into a better organization or higher organization consisting of smaller units known as *Kula* or *Phratries* in Greek language.

It implies that the clansmen and their heads realized the convenience of administering the clan on the basis of smaller administrative units than to take the entire clan as one unit. They therefore took the family or the *Kula* as the basic unit for representation in the governing body. We have ample instances in ancient Indian polity of states organized and governed on *Kula* basis. Most of the aristocratic states of the times of the Buddha and of the Epic Age, accepted the *Kula* as the basis of state organization and recognized the superiority of distinguished families.

The next stage that these non-monarchical people reached was the stage of class consciousness. The family or the *Kula* was no more of any significance. The heads of the families realized that the strength and stability of organized life depends more upon unity and solidarity of the people or the tribe as a whole. This consciousness about unity and solidarity of the people, which was more akin to the concept of Nationalism, was leading them towards the last phase of their political de-

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velopment. In other words they were heading towards full statehood.

The tribal condition of the state and its people was mentioned by Pāṇini as *Janapadināh* and when the people dropped the tribal significance and recognized the political entity of organized life, he called it *Janapada* which is equivalent to the Greek term *Polis* or city state. In Pāṇini's classification of states, the difference between the *Janapadināh* and the full-fledged *Janapadas* is quite perceptible. In the context of the above discussion, we can say that some of the *Yaudheyādi* group were still in the tribal condition, however democratic their life might have been.

The *Subreya,* the *Dhārteya,* the *Sankreya,* the *Vārteya,* the *Ārbhata* and a host of others referred to by the post-Vedic authors, whether historical or mythical, identified or unidentified, are all classed amongst the *Śaśtropajīvi Saṁghas* because they lived by the profession of arms, which was the characteristic feature of the *Āyudhajīvins.* A group of some few thousands of families lived together because of the unifying element of a common profession. There are other instances of *Saṁghas* organized on the basis of caste. The members of the same caste or *Varṇa* united together and organized a community life. Thus we find instances of *Brahmaṇa-Saṁgha* or *Kshatriya Saṁgha.* It shows that such elements of the state, as the language, profession or the caste were attributed primary importance. The concept of state as an organic whole had not obtained recognition till then.

Growth of the political concept of State :

The state, as a purely political concept, matured at a much later stage. The sublimation of the *Janapadināh* into the *Janapada,* the tribe into the city, in Greek terminology, the *Phulai* into the *Polis,* was the last step towards political development. We can verify this process of growth from the three types of *Yaudheya* coins, found in the East Punjab in the Rohtak district and the surrounding regions.

Historical importance of the Yaudheyas:

In the annals of the republics of ancient India, the

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Yaudheyas figure as important people because their name has been mentioned time and again by the grammarians of the post-Vedic period and in the great epic *Mahābhārata*.[10] We find the same people regaining their lost position and reviving their political power after the disintegration of the Mauriyan Empire.

Numismatic evidence:

Various coins of the *Yaudheyas* have been found by research workers which have greatly helped in making their history. The legend on the obverse side of the first group of coins is *Yaudheyānām Bahudhānyake*. This legend indicates the name of the territory they occupied.

Territory of the Yaudheyas:

Their state was called *Bahudhāñyaka* which is the present day Rohtak in the Punjab. General Cunningham, however, places the earliest coins of the *Yaudheyas* in the first century B.C. Rapson agrees with him and refers to them to about 100 B.C.[11] In the second type of coins issued by the *Yaudheyas* we find the name of a person. The legend reads as' *Brahmaṇya Devasya Bhāgvata* or on some coins we find the legend as *Swami Bhāgavata*. A few other proper names are found inscribed on these coins. These are the names of *Kārtikeya* or *Shiva*, the gods they worshipped.

In some later coins, we find the simple legend, *Yaudheya Gaṇasya Jayaḥ*. The three types of coins represent three stages of the life of *Yaudheya gaṇa*. The earliest coins are representative of that stage which marks them as the residents of the *Bahudhāñyaka* country. In the primitive condition of life the people of a territory generally introduced themselves by the name of the land they inhabited. In the second stage of development, when the *Yaudheyas* organized themselves into a compact group, with a common profession, they issued coins in the name of the people along with the name of the deity they worshipped. The different names of *Kārtikeya,* the General of the Gods, inscribed on the coins, attaches importance to their profession. The third type of coins obviously shows that *Yaudheyas* dropped the tribal significance at this stage and had recognized the sovereignty of the entire people. The coins are therefore issued in the name of the *Yaudheya Gaṇa* and no other dedication is indicated there, nor is there the mention of the land they occupied. The legend on these coins simply eulogizes the *gaṇa* and reads as, *Yaudheya Gaṇasya Jayah.* These coins are also of two varieties. In the first variety we find the letter *Dvi* whereas the second variety is marked by the occurrence of the letter *Tri.* These letters signify either the second or the third victory of the *Yaudheya Gaṇa* or their second or third sections of the republic.

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[10] *Mahābhārata*, Karṇaparva, Ch. V. Slokas 46 to 48.

[11] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 269.

Like the *Yaudheyas,* the *Arjunāyanas* and *Mālvas* had also issued coins in the name of the people themselves. This proves that the common practice in republican states was to issue coins in the name of the people. On the basis of these coins it can be said that the *Yaudheyas* in the latter part of their political existence had attained full statehood.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar says that the *Yaudheyas* were a powerful self-governing people who had been the cause of grief for many a kind of valour and power. An idea of the resources and power of the *Yaudheyas* may be formed from the phrase in the Girnar inscription : "Of the *Yaudheyas,* rendered proud by having manifested their title of heroes among all *Kshatriyas.*"[12]

Inscriptional evidence :

We read in the Junagarḥ inscription about the king Mahākshatrapa Rudradamana as a powerful king. But this inscription in line 11 and 12 also tells us how Rudradamana boasts of having rooted out the *Yaudheyas.*[13] The verdict of the coins and inscriptions goes in favour of the importance of the existence of the *Yaudheyas* as a powerful political entity, down at least to the middle of the fourth century A.D. The name of the *Yaudheyas* occur in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, uprooted by him as one of the warrior tribes. We do not hear of the *Yaudheyas* as a republic after this event.

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[12] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate life in Ancient India,* p. 269.

[13] Epigraphica Indica, Vol. VIII. p. 41.

Amidst all the descriptions about their territory, coins, power, prosperity and popularity, one thing is conspicuous by its absence and that is the account of its administrative system. We are amazed to note, not a single record has stored any information about the constitutional structure of such a large republic, which played an important role in the political history of a few centuries.

The incidental references in literature, the coin legends and the pillar inscriptions help us in forming ideas that the locality under the sway of the *Yaudheyas* was large because the materials have been collected from places wide apart.

Extent of the territory:

Vijaygarh in Bharatpur State, East Punjab, Bahawalpur State, North-Western U. P. and parts of East Rajasthan are the find spots of these materials. A territory of this wide expansion could not have been administered without definite constitutional laws. It is quite possible though, that the boundary of the state might not have remained the same for the entire period, from the origin, expansion and extinction of the republic.

No definite information is available about the governing authority or about the administrative offices or the designations of the office-holders, neither a single word is heard about the administrative procedures. The only reference to an important office-holder is found in the Vijaygarh inscription,[14] is the *Mahasenapati*, the Commander-in-chief. But the inscription shows a tendency towards monarchical form towards the fourth century A.D. It remains, however, a subject of interest and curiosity which awaits further investigations.

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[14] Vijaygarh inscription, *"Yaudheyagaṇa-purashkritasya-mahārājā-mahāsenapate......"*

From the present data and literature it is easily understandable that the people's body or as we put it in political terminology, the "body politic," was the sovereign authority. But the curtain over this age is so thick, absolutely with no holes in it to peep through, that there are little chances of knowing, how the popular authority or the political will of the people was exercised.

Pāṇini's reference to the administrative methods in monarchies :

Pāṇini has given place to the discussion of the polity and administration of the monarchical states in his *Sutras.* At various places of his *Aṣṭādhyāi* he has referred to the administrative institutions of a king who is called *Iśvara.* Pāṇini refers to the Council of Ministers or *Parishad* and the qualifications of its members.[15] He refers to another important term of political vocabulary in his *Sūtra*[16] *Rājkritva* meaning king makers. This term throws light upon the republican trend even in the monarchical form of state. A reference to a *Rājsabha* as distinguished from *Parishad* is also found in *Pāṇini's* works. This *Rājsabha* was the general assembly. Tradition makes Bindusar having a council of five-hundred members.

Pāṇini does not stop here, he refers to government servants of several grades organized into a civil service. The term *Āyukta* is the term generally used for government servants. The same men when assigned to special jobs were known as *Niyuktas.* *Pāṇini* has touched almost all the aspects of administration of a monarchical form of state. He has described law and justice and also army under separate heads.

Pāṇini's silence over republican administration :

Pāṇini has not given the same treatment to the other type of polity, i.e., the *Saṁga* polity, in his book. He has shown keen interest in his efforts to prove the existence of non-monarchical forms of states which has already been discussed in the second and third chapter of the present work. Pāṇini's obvious silence about the constitutional structure of the non-monarchical states indicates two things.

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[15] Sūtra, IV. 4. 101 and V. 2. 112.

[16] Sūtra, III. 2. 95.

Firstly, in all probability, there was not one constitutional pattern which could be attributed to the *gaṇa* states. Pāṇini, therefore, did not make any effort to describe the constitutional structure of a republican state. Had there been any one pattern of government working on constitutional lines, it could not have deceived the eyes of a keen observer like him.

The *gaṇas* seem to have advanced politically, in the sense that, they had shifted the abode of sovereign authority from the hereditary monarch to the people. But they had not been able to attain perfection in the sphere of constitutional experiments like the *Śākyas* or *Licchavis*. The second reason of the absence of reference to *gaṇa*-constitutions in Pāṇini's works appears to be the meagreness of material with him. Pāṇini had confined himself to the north-western region alone. He had no acquaintance, it seems, with the republics working in the eastern part of India. A number of republics in that region had developed and a few out of them distinguished themselves as great powers during the Buddha's time.

Pāṇini did not describe fully, the working of the government in a republican state because of the obvious fact that he was primarily a grammarian and not a writer on political institutions. Therefore he took the pragmatic view to dwell upon the question of the existence, location and the outstanding features of the *gaṇa* states, that he happened to see for himself, and not to touch upon their constitutional structure.

The *Yaudheyas, Kshudrakas, Mālavas* and the various other lesser republican organizations named by Pāṇini, whose existence is no more a question of dispute, continued to live through the stages of rise and fall, regress and progress and emerged as powerful *gaṇas* once again, to resist the rising menace of Greek and other foreign forces. Gradually most of these states developed into full-grown republics and resisted successfully, the foreign invasions.

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The Greek authors have handed down to us, records, wherein these states have been described as nothing short of the republican city state of Greece,[17] whose free citizens deliberated upon the affairs of the state, made laws under the guidance of the city fathers or the chosen elders of the city.

The constitutional development of the *gaṇa* states actually started during the time of Gautama Buddha. The systematic working of Buddhist *Saṁgha,* on the basis of a constitution, is the foremost instance of the republican spirit of the age. The *Saṁgha* constitution reflects upon the political organizations of the age. The period of the Buddhist movement therefore attracts most of our attention for the study of the constitutions of republican states and other non-political organizations.

Pāṇini's age was not less important than the times of Gautama Buddha because the republican trends during this period, had permeated through every section of the society. It was also discernible in the *Saṁghas* of lesser importance. The elementary institutions functioned along with the full *Saṁghas.* The three main elementary forms known as *Pūgas, Śreṇis* and *Vrāta* are worth mention.

Pūga: *Pūga* was less developed than a regular *Āyudhajīvi saṁgha* but better organized than the other lesser institutions. In the annals of these elementary republican institutions, *Pūgas* and the *Śreṇis* have the longest record. Even at a later stage the *Kāśika* makes *Pūga* a species of *Saṁgha* composed of members of different castes without any regular occupation but probably of a peaceful character intent on earning money.[18]

Method of deliberation:

From the description given in Pāṇini's *Sūtras,*[19] it appears that the *Pūgas* also had a deliberative organ like any other *Saṁgha* or *gaṇa,* in which deliberations were permissible only in the presence of a quorum. The member whose presence imported to the *Pūga* its completeness being mentioned as *Pūgatitha.*

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[17] R. C. Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India,* Ch. CII. p. 180. Translation of the account of the *'Sambastai'* by Diodorus Siculus.

[18] *India as known to Pāṇini, by* V. S. Agrawala, p. 437. Quoted Kāśika "nānā-jātiya aniyatā-Vrittayah arthakāma-pradhānah Saṇghah Pūgah."

[19] Sūtras, V. 2. 52.

The *sūtras* throw light on the nature of the constitution of the *Pūgas. Sūtra* V. 3. 112 shows that the *Pūgas* derived their names in two ways; some were named after their leader or *Grāmaṇi* and some from other circumstances. We have instances of *Pūgas* named after . the *Grāmaṇi.* Those who recognized Devadatta as their *grāmani* were called *'Devadattakāh'* and similarly *'Yajñadattakāh.'* These were typical names of *Pūgas* called after their *Grāmaṇis.* This practice of deriving the name of the *Pūga* from its original *Grāmaṇi* founder, continued through generations.

Mahābhārata also gives evidence of the existence of these *gaṇas* named after their *Grāmaṇi.*[20] The *Mahābhārata* says that the war-like *Grāmayians* lived on the banks of the Indus and they fought against Nakula in his western campaign. We can thus locate these *Pūgas* in the tribal area, to the west of Indus. Pāṇini names some of them, e.g., *Asani,* the *Apritas.* These *Pūgas* had till recently been governed by their council of elders which according to the frontier Crimes Regulation had a determining voice in the adjudication of criminal cases and which represented survival of the old forms of *Saṁgha* government obtained amongst them.[21]

Kumar Pūga :

Besides the ordinary *Pūga,* we find in *Sūtra* VI.2.28 a reference to youth organizations of these *Pūgas* with the prefix *'Kumāra'* added to their names, e.g., *Kumāra Chātakāh, Kumāra-Lohadhvajāh, Kumār Balāhakāh, Kumar Jīmutāh.* Pāṇini has thus noted that the *gaṇas* recognized the *Yuvaka* membership as well as *Vriddha* membership. Kautilya also

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[20] *Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparva, 32. 9.

[21] V. S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇinī,* p. 438.

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mentions these two divisions as *Saṁgha-Mukhyas* and *Kumarakas* distinctly existing inside *Saṁgha Organization.*[22]

Equal representation to the old and the young:

The *Pūga* constitution, however little is known, is of political importance because, according to this constitution, both the young and the old members of each family received social and political recognition in the *Kula* as well as the *Saṁgha*. This tendency towards pure methods of republicanism has also been referred to and dealt in *Aṅguttara Nikāya.*[23] It deals with various types of governments which bore the lineage of the republican states of the post-Vedic age. In the concluding portion of part III of *Aṅguttara Nikāya,* we are told that one class of rulers was *Pūga-Grāmaṇika,* chiefs of the *Pūgas* and below them in rank are the chiefs of *Kulas. Pūga* was thus a democratic organization, following the *gaṇa-padhati.*

Śreṇi :

Besides the *Pūgas* there were other types of *Āyudhajīvi* organizations. They were known as *Śreṇis.* The *śreṇis* were taken into consideration by *Pāṇini* as also by Kautilya. Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* has referred to the *Kṣatriya Śreṇi* as *Vārtā-Śastropajīvins. Śreṇis* have also attached a political importance in *Mahābhārata* which mentions that *Śreṇis* were fighting on the side of Duryodhana.[24] Pāṇini's *Sūtra*[25] shows that the political development at work among the *Āyudhajīvi* peoples, organizing themselves into new *śreṇis* and *Pūgas.* Bands of *Āyudhajīvi* warriors were coming under the general influence of political awakening and emerging into organized political life. The linguistic formation such as *aśrenayaḥ*

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[22] Kautilya, *Arthashastra,* XI. 1. p. 378.

[23] Aṅguttara Nikāya, Pt. III, pp. 76, 160, quoted by Prof. D. K. Bhandarkar in his *"Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity"* Lect. IV, p. 103.

[24] Karṇaparva, V. 40, *"Srenayo Bahusahasrāh samsaptaka-gaṇāscha ye."*

[25] *Sūtra* II. 1. 59. "Srenyadayah Kritadibhiḥ".

śrenayah kritah śrenikritah points to these new political developments.

Economic purpose of the Śreṇis :

The *Śreṇis* are also found mentioned amongst the trade guilds, organized even before the rise of Buddism.[26] Besides the economic activities, the craftsmen of this period had done another important thing. They had formed their respective guilds. These guilds or corporations were called *Nigama, Saṁgha, Śreṇi, Pūga* and *Nikāya*.

These guilds had independent organizations under the leadership of a *Pramukha* or a president. In the *Jātakas*,[27] the heads of the traders were called *'Sattha-Vāhajetthaka'*. The heads of these trade guilds often had important voice in the matters of administration of the state. The corporations had their own rules which were honoured by the king.

This description of the *Śreṇis,* found in the *Jātakas,* obviously creates a dilemma for us, whether the *Śreṇis* actually belonged to the lesser political group or should be classed amongst the economic organizations practising the republican methods.

To me it appears that some of these trade guilds had become fully organized, self-governing bodies under competent leadership. Pāṇini took them to be a variety of *Saṁgha* organization. The *Śreṇis* referred to in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* as *Vārtā-Śastropajīnah* were the same corporations of craftsmen which in due course of time became almost independent of the political authority of the state and announced their independent entity on the strength of the economic footing and political experience they had acquired. Their economic activities will be given separate consideration later.

Gradually these economic corporations mustered up sufficient strength to organize themselves into a military power and attained political recognition. Perhaps this process of development had been complete by the time of *Mahābhārata* where a reference to the thousands of *śreṇis* destroyed by the Pāṇdavas is found.[28] It suggests that the *śreṇis* were amongst the allies of the *Kauravas.*

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[26] Nalinaksha Dutt and K. D. Bajpai, *Development of Buddhism in U. P.*, Ch. II. p. 29.

[27] Jātaka No. 256.

Like other *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas,* nothing can, however, be said about the internal organization of the *Śreṇis.* It is difficult even to confirm their political significance during the age of Pāṇini.

Vrātas :

Vrātas have also been considered by Pāṇini amongst the lesser *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas* but they do not seem to have made any political advancement worth mention. They were backward in their political activities and experiments as compared to the *Pūgas* or *Śreṇis.* It is said that like the *Pūgas* they were also organized under the leadership of a *Grāmaṇi.* An instance from the Buddhist literature is quoted,[29] the discourse of Yodhajña Gamani with the Buddha. This discourse definitely proves the *Vrātas* to have had *grāmaṇis.* The details about their method of appointment is however not known.

The numismatic data and literature available about the republican institutions of this period have little in store about their constitutional structure. We, therefore, carry the impression that they had not made much headway towards constitutional development, however democratic their life might have been.

Indian republics in Greek accounts :

The growth of the republican institutions remained unarrested till the time of Alexander's campaign. They thrived and prospered on the banks of the Sindhu and had the opportunity to show their valour, unity and patriotism against the massive military operations of the Greeks. About the republican states of this period, the most authentic informations are available in the accounts of the Greek writers. Their specialisation in the art of state and government enabled them to make the finest distinction between aristocracy, obligarchy and democracy.

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[28] *Mahābhārata,* Karṇaparva, Ch. V. Sl. 45.

[29] *Samyutta Nikāya,* IV. 308. 09.

Megasthenes, the Greek envoy in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, has given a detailed account of the time he was in India. There can be no room for doubt about the authenticity of his account because he was not a 'passing raider' like Alexander's companions but an observer for several years, of the courts of monarchs as well as of the political conditions of republican states

He writes, ". . . . . At least, however, after many years had gone, most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government, though some retained the kingly until the invasion of the country by Alexander. Of several remarkable customs existing among the Indians, there is one prescribed by their ancient philosophers which one may regard as truly admirable: for the law ordains that no one among them shall under any circumstances, be a slave . . . .".[30]

This extract from the account of Megasthenes suggests two clear features of that age. Firstly, there were two types of polity, monarchical and republican and the second feature is equality of the citizens in a republic, before law. We know that Indian society has always been organized on the basis of *Varnāśrama*. Even during the time of the Buddha, the *Brahmaṇas* and *Kṣatriyas* enjoyed specific positions and rights in the Society but they stood on par before law. Similar was the condition perhaps, during the time of Megasthenes which led him to make this remark that "no one among them shall under any circumstances, be a slave", in the sense the Greeks had them in their city states.

It appears from the description of the Greek authors that the whole of the western region, during the invasion of Alexander was studded with 'free', 'autonomous' or 'independent' communities. Some of these communities were independent political units governed by the many, as distinguished from the rule of one.

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[30] *Megasthenes and Arrian, Ancient India*—Translated by J. W. McCrindle, p. 37.

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Greek writers have referred to a number of incidents, involving therein the states existing at that time. From these incidents we have to collect relevant material for the purpose of describing the forms of republican governments. We come across statements scattered here and there, making clear remarks about the existence of kingless states, like the one made by Megasthenes, "those who live near the sea have no kings".[31]

An unnamed republic :

These various states "near the sea" have been described as self-governing people. Some of them were fully developed aristocracies as we read in the Arrian's Anabasis ; Alexander makes the following statement while addressing his officers, "it was reported that the country beyond the river Hyphasis *Beas* was fertile and that the men were good agriculturists, and gallant in war ; and that they conducted their own political affairs in a regular and constitutional manner. For the multitude was ruled by the aristocracy, who governed in no respect contrary to the rules of moderation."[32] This state, however, remains unnamed in the Greek accounts.

Description of the Government :

In the description of the government of this unnamed republic, we read about a parliament consisting of 5,000 members, each supplying one elephant to the state army. The forces on Alexander's side had already heard about the size and equipments of the army on the other side of the Beas. They refused to advance an inch, though Alexander himself was excited by these reports and had "an ardent desire to advance farther". Dr. K. P. Jayaswal says that the campaign of Alexander "assumed the form of retreat" perhaps from the doors of this unnamed republic. "The find-spot of *Yaudheya* coins suggest that this unnamed state on the Beas was probably of the *Yaudheyas*".[33]

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[31] *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

[32] Arrian, *Indian Invasion by Alexander*—translated by McCrindle. Quoted by R. C. Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India*, p. 51.

[33] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. VIII. p. 57.

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Kṣudrakas and Mālavas:

The next powerful group of states is referred to be occupying the passage of Jhelum after the union with Chenab. To be more accurate we may say, it was the land of the *Kṣudrakas* and *Mālavas*, "down the Indus and up to the Indian frontier in Baluchistan. In the report of Curtius Rufus we read, Alexander was returning after his battle with the *Śibis*, (Siboi as the Greeks named the people) who were the republican friends of the *Mallois*, while returning he met the ambassadors of the *Sudracae* (Kṣudrakas) and *Malli* (Mallas) proffering submission.[34]

The league of the Kṣudrakas and Mālavas:

The *Kṣudrakas* and *Mālavas* had formed a league in order to raise a powerful army to resist the Greek invasion. The strength of the army as given by Curtius, was 1,00,000. The Macedonian writers themselves describe and admit their importance even after the war. The league of these two warring republics sent 100 ambassadors to the Macedonian King. They informed him that they surrendered into his hands,. . . . . . "they had intrusted their liberty which for so many ages they had preserved inviolate."

The number of ambassadors shows that they represented a people governed by an assembly more or less numerous. Curtius also informs us that to lead the united army a brave warrior of the *Kṣudrakas* was elected and that he was an experienced general.

"The existence of this league before the time of Kātyāyana is proved by his *'varttika'* and the comments of Patañjali on Pāṇini. The league did not exist in the time Pāṇini as he does not provide a form for the united army. Kātyāyana supplied this and removed what he found in his time a deficiency."[35] The Greek writers have described a large territory of the *Mallas*, comprising of many towns and villages.

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[34] R. C. Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of India*, Ch. VII. p. 148.

[35] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 60.

Ambaṣṭhas :

Diodorus Siculus informs us that Alexander came across a few democratic states on his way back through the western bank of the Indus river. The *Ambaṣṭhas* are described as a people, "inferior to none in India, either for numbers or for bravery. They dwelt in cities in which the democratic form of government prevailed, and on hearing that the Macedonians were coming to attack them, collected 60,000 foot soldiers, 6,000 horse and 500 chariots." But they did not fight, they adopted instead, "the advice of their elders not to fight and therefore sent on an embassy consisting of fifty of their foremost citizens."[36]

The *Ambaṣṭhas,* variously called by the Greeks, had a long past. They existed from the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa when they were probably settled in the Punjab. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* it is referred to as a kingship under King *Ambaṣṭha.* In *Mahābharata* they are mentioned along with the *Sibis, Kṣudrakas, Mālavas* and other north-western tribes. Ultimately they were connected with the *Sibis* and *Yaudheyas* and were settled on the eastern border of the Punjab.[37]

Dr. Jayaswal suggests that these elders, whose advice was adopted by the *Ambaṣṭhas,* were the members of the upper house. It will be too much to say that these small republics had bi-cameral system of legislature, when we hardly see variety of interests to be represented in the government. Moreover, Dr. Altekar rightly suggests that the privileged classes, who formed the assembly, were very jealous of their status and extraction and would hardly have tolerated an upper house.[38]

Sovereignty of the Assembly:

The appointment of the elders, the ambassadors and the election of the generals suggests that, sovereignty was vested in the assembly. There is no mention of any particular class or group of the people forming the assembly, at the same time, the Greeks define them as a democracy. From all this information we can deduce that the members of the assembly were the representatives of the people at large. The constitution of the *Ambaṣthas,* with a popular assembly and a Council of Elders as guardians, may be classed as a blending of democratic and aristocratic elements.

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[36] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great,* pp. 292-93.

[37] B. C. Law, *Some Ancient Indian Minor States,* **J. I. H. Vol.** 28, 1950.

[38] A. S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India,* p. 116.

Agra-Śreṇis :

In the classical accounts we find a community called 'Agalassians' by Diodorus, "who had mustered up an army of 40,000 foot and 3,000 horse, and fought with great vigour from the houses, so that Alexander in pressing the attack lost not a few Macedonians."[39] When they failed to resist any more, they set fire to the city and destroyed their home and hearth together with their wives and children (another description says, Alexander set fire to the city). This piece of information does not say anything about their government but we can presume from the way they conducted the battle, that they were a self-governing non-monarchical community.

Brāhmaṇ and Kṣatriya republics :

There were other similar communities called *Brachmanoi* and *Xatroi,* which have been identified as the *Brāhmaṇa* and *Kṣatriya* republics. About the *Brāhmaṇas.* Plutarch writes, "these philosophers gave him (Alexander) no less trouble than the mercenaries because they reviled the princes who declared for him and encouraged the free states to revolt from his authority." The *Kṣatriyas* were similarly referred to as an independent community.

Other smaller communities :

Several other names of small, independent states are mentioned by the Greeks, all of which tried to preserve their liberty by means of war or peace. They were the *Mousikanos, Kathaians, Pimparama, Saṅgala, Sambos* and so forth. Some of these, i.e., *Sambos,* have been distinctly mentioned by Diodorus as kingship.

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[39] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great,* p. 285.

Pātala :

From the evidence of the accounts left by the Greeks, we can take *Pātala* as one of the mixed types of states which had a Government of its own kind. The Greek writers have compared it to the constitution of Sparta and Dr. B. C. Law has called it "non-monarchical, that is to say, oligarchic form".[40] Dr. Jayaswal on the other hand says that, this was a combination of aristocracy and democracy.[41] In Dr. Law's statement we find the confusion of political terminology. Non-monarchical or antimonarchical states are called republics and not oligarchies, again all republican states may not be oligarchies. The difference between these kinds of states and governments has already been clarified in chapter one.

An examination of the statement of Diodorus will show that the constitution was not a combination of aristocracy and democracy. He says, "in this community the command in war was vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses, while a Council of Elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority".[42] It clearly indicates that it had hereditary monarchy balanced or rivalled by the power of a Council of Elders. This form of government in no case can be called "aristocratic in form and democratic in spirit"; it is on the contrary, an instance of a combination of monarchy and aristocracy.

Nyasa :

Another state, which is often referred to by Indian scholars as a non-Indian state, because it was founded by Dionysos at an earlier period,[43] is described by Arrian as an aristocracy.[44] The state of Nyasa was situated between the *Kophen* (Kabul) and the river Indus. From its situation it can be said that, it was not outside Indian territory. When Alexander came to *Nyasa*, the Nysians sent out to him their President whose name was Akouphis, and along with him thirty deputies of their most eminent citizens . . . . .". "Nyasa was a free city and was governed by their own laws and was a well-ordered community. Alexander confirmed the inhabitants of Nyasa in the enjoyment of their freedom and their own laws; and when he enquired about their laws, he praised them because the government of their state was in the hands of the aristocracy." This description shows that Nyasa was a republic with an aristocratic government headed by a president. When the Nysians say "we are governed by our own laws", we can easily conclude that their laws were passed and enforced with the consent of the entire community or its elected assembly.

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[40] B. C. Law, *Some Ancient Indian Minor States*, J.I.H. 1950. Vol. 28.

[41] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 72.

[42] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, p. 296.

[43] B. C. Law, *ut supra*.

[44] McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander*, Bk. V. p. 81.

General features of the republics of the age:

The Greeks have thrown light upon the pattern of the states and governments that Alexander conquered or came across. Their accounts are mainly of the battles fought by the Greek forces, with those of the Indian states. It is natural, therefore, that the informations regarding state and government are very meagre. From the scant material available, we get the few characteristic features of the republics of this period.

Democratic spirit:

First of all we notice that the various republics named by the Greeks, with a few exceptions like the *Mallas* and *Kṣudrakas*, were small communities occupying small territories. Each republic was constituted of one particular class or community of people. Hence the entire community had some say in the formation of the government. We do not hear about any republic which comprised of a mixed population and a governing body formed out of a particular class of people, like the *Śākyas* or the *Licchavis*. In this respect they seem to be more democratic in spirit. Their aristocracy lies in the selected leadership that they deputed for over-all guidance or supervision in conducting war-affairs.

No separation of power:

From the description of the assembly of some of the re-

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public like *Ambaṣṭhas* or *Kṣudrakas* and *Mallas,* it seems that all powers were vested in the assembly. It exercised the power of appointment of the president, of the generals and ambassadors; it enjoyed the legislative powers and perhaps judicial powers also. The classical writers have mentioned the good laws of some of the republics but no mention is made of law-courts. It can be concluded that there was no separation of power in these republics. The close proximity of the government and the people might be one of the reasons. The government could be easily controlled by the people, hence they did not feel the necessity of applying the theory of separation of power.

Love of freedom and patriotism :

Some of the fierce battles fought by the *Agraśrenis, Brahmanos* and the *Mallas* show their great desire for freedom and a high order of patriotism. Strong desire for freedom from authoritarianism was enveloping the entire region. A number of small, almost unknown communities lived freely, governed by no kings but their own laws. Pliny's account is a testimony to this. He says, "below these deserts we find the Maltecorae, Singhae, Marohae, Rarungae, Moruni. These inhabit the hills which in an unbroken chain run parallel to the shores of the ocean. They are free and have no kings, and occupy the mountain heights, whereon they have built many cities."[45]

Dr. A. S. Altekar is of the opinion that the Greek accounts should not be brushed aside as imagination which incited them to see hellenistic things in non-hellenistic countries. The accounts prove, that there were no such big monarchy in the Punjab in the days of Alexander the Great. Non-monarchical states were more extensive and powerful.

After the invasion of Alexander rose the Mauryan Empire. Kautilya, the author of the *Arthaśastra,* being a firm believer in monarchy, devoted all his attention to the growth and prosperity of an empire. From an author of his eminence we expected to receive a mine of informations while we received the least from him about the republics.

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[45] R. C. Majumdar, *Classical Accounts of Ancient India*, pp. 343-44.

Republics during the time of Kautilya :

The invasion of Alexander weakened the republics of the north-western region but it could not crush the republican trends. The republics continued to exist even during the time of Kautilya. Besides the republics of the west which lived by agriculture, some trade or the profession of arms, Kautilya mentions the *Licchavis, Vṛjis, Mallas, Mudrakas, Kukuras, Kurus* and *Pañcālas* who lived under chiefs entitled to be called '*Rājās*'.[46] Kautilya classified the republics around the monarchical states into two classes: (1) the '*Vārtāśastropajīvins*', and (2) the '*Rājaśabdopajīvins*' i.e., living by some profession, trade, agriculture or warfare and states governed by assemblies constituted of *rājās*.

From the meagre details preserved in the '*Arthaśastra*', little is known about the *Saṁghas*. But this much is clear that the *Saṁghas* possessed seals or badges, issued money and had a central treasury. Those authorized to disburse this money were held responsible to the head of the state and were inflicted with serious punishment in case of fraud or misuse of power.

Saṁgha Mukhya :

The affairs of the *Saṁgha* were entrusted to the *Saṁgha Mukhya* who was most probably the elected leader backed by political parties.[47]

Party rivalry :

Party rivalry was strong in these Saṁghas. Kautilya, in book XI of his *Arthaśāstra*, advises kings to take advantage of

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[46] *Kautilya, Arthaśāstra*, Bk. XI 'संघवृत्तम्'.
काम्बोजसुराष्ट्र क्षत्रिय श्रेण्यादयो वार्ताशस्त्रोपजीविनः 4 :
लिच्छिविक वृजिक-मल्लकमद्रक कुकुर कुरुपांचालादयो राजशब्दोपजीविनः । 5 :

[47] N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, Pt. II. pp. 50, 51.

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groupism and partisan feeling. In many respects the account in the *Arthaśāstra* bears a close resemblance to that in the *Śāntiparva*. Kautilya realized the value of the *Saṁghas*. In his sympathy for the empire builders, he went so far as to extol the value of republican aid to a conqueror aspiring after universal domination. In his eyes their help was superior in value to the gain of an army or an ally, and he calls upon the conqueror to secure the services of these corporations. We are furnished with greater details about republics in the two famous chapters of the *Mahābhārata* in which the merits, demerits and typical problems of the *gaṇa-states* are thoroughly examined and well considered remedies are suggested. On the contrary, Kautilya exposes the weaknesses of the *gaṇas* and suggests that the ambitious monarchs should exploit and keep them divided against themselves. It is easier to annihilate them when they become weak internally. Due to this imperialistic policy of Kautilya, the republics gradually became weaker during the Mauryan Empire.

Republics were reduced to mere self-governing people yet they continued to exist not only in the northern region but also in the south. The Rock Edict XIII refers to some territories in the south which are mentioned as a people and not as kingdoms. The *Satiyaputras* mentioned in the *Mansehra* version of R. E. II, are such a people whose territory lay to the west of the territories of the *Colas* and *Pandyas* and extended along the western sea-coast of South India. The *Satiyaputras* had their territory above that of the *Keralaputras*. Dr. B. C. Law says that the *Keralaputras* were the independent "frontagers" or "borderers." He is of the opinion that the *Keralaputras* were undoubtedly the Kerala or Chera country. Like the Colas, the Keralas were one of the earliest tribes in Southern India.

Dr. Law says that in the second and thirteenth Rock Edicts, Aśoka mentions the *'Ketalaputras* or *Keralas'* as a people living on the border though outside his own realm.[48] According to his reading, the *Satiyaputras* and *Keralaputras* were "people" on the borders. Since they are not mentioned to be under any king, we may presume that they were non-monarchical, self-governing people. Nothing is known, however, about the form of their government. Thus we can say that, non-monarchical states, though in miniature form, can be traced in the distant southern regions also.

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[48] B. C. Law, *Some Ancient Indian Minor States*, Journal of Indian History, Vol. 28. 1950, pp. 100-101.

CHAPTER VI

REPUBLICS DURING THE EPIC AND POST MAURYAN AGE

(2nd *c*. B.C. to the middle of 4th *c* A.D.)

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are the two great epics which have been attributed historical importance by scholars. Besides their religious, moral and social significance, politics formed the integral part of the two great works. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* we find that the public, both the intelligentsia and common people, were politically alert and alive.

The *Riṣis* who composed works on law, science of government and politics, regarded the principles of constitutional monarchy as the best and stablest foundation of the ideal state. They did not leave any loop-hole for the kings developing into autocrats but they never talked of republican form of government either.[1] Dr. N. C. Bandopadhyaya also says that the people remained supreme in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa,* because we repeatedly hear of the *Pauras* and the *Janapadas.*[2] Beyond this the author does not pass any remark about the republican trends in the *Rāmāyaṇa.* The *Mahābhārata* preserves a store of valuable informations regarding the non-monarchical states. We, therefore, have to look to this epic, where informations are found scattered all over the work. Two chapters in the *Śāntiparva* have specially been devoted to the nature and problems of republican polity. Thus the *Mahābhārata* can be taken as the chief literary evidence for the prevalence of republican states during the epic age.

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[1] See Dr. S. Mookerjee's article on *"Political Wisdom of Ancient India,"* J.B.R.S. Vol. XXXV. March—December, 1959. A. S. Altekar Memorial Volume.

[2] N. C. Banerjee, *Politics and Political History in the Mahābhārata,* I.H.Q. Vol. I, No. 3, Sept. 1925.

In *Bhīṣmaparva,* we come across the names of the mighty *Kṣatriyas, the Kuru-Pañchalas, Kukuras, Bhojas* and several others. Some of these have been mentioned in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* as *Rājaśabdopaīvi-Saṁghas.* Along with the names of the *Kuru-Pañchālas, Bhojas* and *Kukuras* we also get the names of states, such as *Malla-Raṣtras, Vāhīkas* and *Videhas.*[3] In Buddhist literature we read about the *Mallas* and *Videhas* to have taken republican form of government and the *Vāhīkas* figure in the account of Pāṇini as the important republicans of the western region. In the references about these states in the *Bhīṣmaparva* it is not said that they were under the rule of a particular monarch or a particular dynasty. On the contrary they are mentioned by the name of the people or their territory. It implies that they were communities under a political pattern, other than monarchical.

Sabhāparva offers us more positive informations. We read in it that Arjuna conquered various states, situated outside his brother's territory and brought them under his suzerainty. Some of these states are named as *'gaṇas',* and one amongst them seems to be a league of ten independent groups of people. They are the *'Paṇchagaṇā', 'Gaṇānutsavasaṇketa'* and *'Daśamandala'.* Besides these, he conquered the *Kaśmiras* and the King of Lohita.[4] In this part of the *Sabhāparva* we can identify some of the states as *gaṇas* because they have been explicitly mentioned to be so. Even in these clear references we learn nothing about the constitutional structure of these *gaṇas*.

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[3] "मल्ला: सुदेष्णा प्राहुतास्तथा माहिषकार्षिका: ।
वाहीका वाटधानाश्च आभीरा: कालतोयका: ।।"

Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva, Ch. X, Sl. 45.

"काश्मीरा: सिन्धुसौवीरा गान्धारा दर्शकास्तया ।
अभीसारा कुलूताश्च शैवला बालिकास्तथा ।।"

Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva, Ch. X, Sl. 52.

"दर्विका: सकचा दर्वा वातलामर योरगा: ।
बहुवाद्याश्च कौरव्य सुदामान: सुमल्लिका: ।।"

Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva, Ch. X, Sl. 53.

"कच्छा गोपाल कच्छाश्च लांगला: पखल्लका: ।
किरताबर्बरा: सिद्धा विदेहास्ताम्रलिगका ।।"

Mahābhārata, Bhīṣmaparva, Ch. X, Sl. 55.

States conquered by Nakula:

Nakula, another brother of Yudhisthira, had gone to a different part of the country to bring the smaller states under his brother's sway. *Sabhāparva* describes the journey and the people he conquered. He fought battles with the kingdoms across the desert in the western region and then encountered the forces of the *Daṣarṇas, Śibis, Trigarthas, Ambaṣthas, Mālavas, Panchakarpata* and then proceeded to the mid-country states. There also he defeated the *Kṣatriyas* of the *Vātadhan* state. Nakula's adventure did not end here, he defeated all the powerful *gaṇa* states like *Utsava-Saṇketa* and village communities, which were all closely situated on the banks of the Sindhu.

The self-governing villages and their valiant headmen who lived near the sea, the *Śudras, Ābhīras,* beside the river Saraswati, and some other independent tribes near the mountains, all accepted Nakula's brother's paramountcy. Thus he defeated the numerous *gaṇas* and self-governing tribes from the Punjab up to the banks of river Saraswati. When Nakula reached the outer fringe of Sri Kṛṣṇa's state, i.e., the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi confederation, he sent his envoy instead of an armed force and Kṛṣṇa, the president of the league, readily accepted

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[4] "तत्रस्थः पुरुषैरेव धर्मराजस्य शासनात् ।
किरीटी जितवान् राजन् देशान् पंचगणांस्तेतः ।।"
Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva, Ch. 24, Sl. 11.

"पौरवं तु विनिर्जित्य दस्यून् पर्वतवासिनः ।
गुणानुत्सव संकेतान जयत् सप्त पाण्डवः ।।"
Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva, Ch. 24, Sl. 14.

"ततः काश्मीरकान्वीरान-क्षत्रियान्-क्षत्रियर्षभः ।
व्यजयल्लोहितं चैव मण्डलैर्दशभिः सह ।।"
Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva, Ch. 24, Sl. 16.

Nakula's terms as any allied power would do.[5] This indicates that the Vṛṣṇi state had cordial relations with the *Pāndavas* and therefore the question of forcible subjection did not arise.

Like Arjuna and Nakula, Karṇa also offered himself to fight against the states in all the four directions of the Bhārata-land and bring them under the paramountcy of Duryodhana. Karṇa's competitive spirit and his programme of *Digvijay* shows that there was an eternal conflict for sovereign power between powerful monarchies. Generally such sovereign powers were satisfied if the feudatories offered a fixed tribute in the form of presents on ceremonial occasions or tax towards the central exchequer. In such conquests the paramount power did not interfere with the internal administration of the feudatories.[6]

States conquered by Karna:

Vanaparva describes how Karṇa went to all the four directions and conquered the kingdoms one by one and made them pay tax to the central exchequer of Duryodhana. After defeating the kingdoms, he also brought to subjection, the *gaṇas* of the *Mlechas,* of the forest dwelling tribes, of the mountainous tribes, *Bhadra, Rohitaka, Āgreya* and *Mālava gaṇas.*[7] In Karṇa's victories also we read that his armies did not march into the land of the *Vṛṣṇis.* There he had to adopt peaceful methods and with the help of the *Vṛṣṇis* only he conquered the states in the western region.[8] Thus in the reports of the conquests of the three princes of the *Mahābhārata,* we come to know almost about all the *gaṇas* existing around the kingdom of the *Kurus* and *Pāndavas.* With this background of a long list of names of *gaṇa* states we are better stationed to examine the well-known discourse between Yudhisthira and Bhīṣma.

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[5] “तत्र युद्धं महच्चासीच्छूरैर्मत्र मयूरकै ।
मरुभूमि स कात्सनर्येन तथैव बहुधान्यकम् ।।” 5. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29

“शैरीषकं महेच्छं च वशे चक्रे महाद्युतिः ।
शिबीं स्त्रिगर्तानम्बष्ठान्मालवान्पंचकर्पटान् ।।” 6. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29

“तथा मध्यमिकायांश्च वाटधानान्द्विजानथ ।
पुनश्च परिवृत्याय पुष्करारण्य वासिनः ।।” 7. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29

“गणानुत्सवसंकेतान्व्यजयत्पुरुषर्षभः ।
सिन्धुकूलाश्रिता ये च ग्रामणेया महाबलाः ।।” 8. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29

“शूद्राभीरगणाश्चैव ये चाश्रित्य सरस्वतीम् ।
वर्तयन्ति च ये मत्स्येर्ये च पर्वतवासिनः ।।” 9. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29

“तत्रस्थः प्रेषयामास वासुदेवाय चाभियः ।
स चास्य दशमी राज्यैः प्रतिजग्राह शासनम् ।।” 12. *Sabhā Parva*, Ch. 29.

[6] V. V. Dixit, *Relation of the Epics to the Brāhmaṇa Literature*, Poona Oriental Series. Vol. VI. No. 89. 1950. pp. 8-9.

Bhīṣma's views on the gaṇas:

In chapter 107 of *Śānti-parva,*[9] Bhīṣma, in compliance with the desire of Yudhisthira, explains the nature, behaviour and problems of the *gaṇas* around him. His views sufficiently prove that he was well acquainted with the working of this type of polity. The possible consequences of the internal dissension of the *gaṇas* made him suggest sympathetically, the appropriate remedies. Thus we see that the epic writer evinced as much solicitude for the welfare, prosperity and continued existence of these republican states as Kautilya had done for their ruin and destruction. And it can be said that a fair specimen has been preserved in section 107 of the *Śānti-parva* of *Mahābhārata.*[10]

Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* and *Rajdharma* of the *Śāntiparva,* both have dealt mainly with the kingly science. But we find a remarkable difference between the two in respect of their attitude towards the *gaṇa*-polity. During the time of Kautilya, *gaṇas* had already suffered from a serious set-back due to the Greek invasion and he thought it to be the most appropriate time for the rising Mauryan empire to exterminate the *gaṇa* movement from the stage of politics.

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[7] Vana-Parva, Ch. 254, Sl. 19, 20. (Gita Press Ed.)

[8] Vana-Parva. Ch. 254, Sl. 17.

[9] *Mahābhārata, Śantiparva,* Ch. 108 of Poona Ed. (Ch. 107 of Gita Press Ed.)

[10] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India.* Ch. III, p. 257.

On the other hand, Nakula and Karṇa sought for alliance with the Vṛṣṇi state, Yudhisthira accepted Kṛṣṇa as the best diplomatic counsel and Bhīṣma suggested, "*gaṇas* should unite within a federation" in order to avert foreign rule.[11] Many of the *gaṇas* mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* seem to be those which had lived before, during the time of the Buddha, Pāṇini and Kautilya. They survived all turmoils of a political career and figured once again in the *Mahābhārata* as important states. The *Vāhīkas* of Pāṇini's time, the *Mallakas, Madrakas, Kurus, Pānchalas, Licchavikas, Vṛjjikas, Yaudheyas, Mālavas* and *Śibis* are some of them. These features of the *Mahābhārata* lead us to believe that *Mahābhārata* and specially the part consisting of *Śāntiparva,* was written later in point of time than Kautilya's chapter on corporations. Dr. R. C. Majumdar provides reasonable grounds for our belief. He writes in his "Corporate life in Ancient India" : "it is evident from Pāṇini's use of the term that *Saṁgha* was at first used to denote all corporations. Later on the term was monopolized by the Buddhist religious community and as the coins show, the term *gaṇa* was almost exclusively employed by the post-Mauryan political corporations. Now Kautilya uses only the term *Saṁgha* to denote corporation while *gaṇa* alone is used in section 107 of *Śāntiparva.* This seems to me to give rise to a strong presumption in favour of the priority of the chapter in *Arthaśāstra* to the corresponding one in the *Mahābhārata.*"[12]

Thus, *gaṇas* had revived after the age of *Arthaśāstra* and had justified their existence by playing an important role in the *Mahābhārata.* But they had certain ingrained weaknesses which had subjugated them, time and again, to imperialist powers. Bhīṣma starts his discourse from here. He says, "greed and jealousy, O King, are the two main provoking causes of enmity amongst the *gaṇās,* as well as amongst the *kulas* of

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[11] "तस्मात् संघातमेबाहुर्गणानां शरणं महत् ॥"

Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 32.

[12] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* p. 257.

rājās[13] In *ślokas* eleven to fourtten, Bhīṣma says, how *gaṇas* are also jealous of each other and out of jealousy they practise methods of waste and decay inflicting mutual destruction. They oppress one another through spies, intrigues and military force by employing the policy of conciliation, subsidy and division and by applying other means of decay, waste and danger. He also points towards the confederacies of *gaṇas* and says, (Sl. 13), the *gaṇas* which form a confederacy are divided by those means ; divided they become indifferent (to the common cause) and ultimately through fear they pass under the control of the enemy. Thus divided, the *gaṇas* will surely perish, for separated they fall an easy prey to the foe."

Confederation is the remedy :

Therefore Bhīṣma's advice to the *gaṇas* is, "they should always exert themselves through the system of confederacy" (Sl. 14). The reasons of his advice are obvious. Bhīṣma, like a practical statesman, believes that money cannot procure good soldiers but good soldiers can procure money. Therefore he says, "material prosperity is won by the prowess of the confederated army; outsiders also seek the alliance of confederate entities." Taking into consideration, the size and the population of these small *gaṇa* states it seems quite natural of Bhīṣma to advise them to exert themselves through a confederacy. For otherwise the economic and military resources of each small republic would be too meagre to protect or maintain them.

Thus we see that the new school appears to possess genuine sympathy for these political corporations. Instead of suggesting dubious devices by which ruin may be brought upon the *gaṇas*, it offers healthy recommendations for avoiding those pitfalls and dangers to which they are peculiarly liable. After pointing to the chief weaknesses of the *gaṇas*, Bhīṣma draws our attention towards the merits of the *gaṇas*.

Merits of the Gaṇas :

Bhīṣma says (Slokas 16-17) that in ideal *gaṇas* the leader-

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13. K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Ch. XIV.

ship is given to the Elders-by-knowledge who encourage mutual subordination; behaving with complete straight-forwardness to one another and thus good *gaṇas* attain happiness all round." And again (in Sl. 18) we read, "good *gaṇas* prosper because they discipline their sons and brothers (i.e. younger generations) and always train them and they accept only those who have been well trained." This information suggests two things. Firstly that the *gaṇas* had faith in aristocracy of intellect and therefore the society accepted only those who were disciplined, well trained and of highest intellectual calibre.

Secondly we learn that these elders were given equal status. They encouraged mutual subordination, behaving with complete straight-forwardness to one another.

Other means of success:

Bhīṣma praises the efficiency of the *gaṇas* in other different spheres too. He says, the efficient working of espionage service, the collection of revenue to the exchequer and the sense of responsibility of the heroic, enthusiastic and persevering officers are the other causes of the prosperity of *gaṇas*. In *śloka* twenty-one, it is said that the *gaṇas* also extend help and protection to the helpless members across miseries and calamities. This indicates that state protection was given to the rich and poor alike, and that is a criterion of a progressive, welfare-bound, democratic state.

Organization of the Government:

The Assembly: The most important part of the discourse is from *śloka* twenty-three to thirty-one wherein is described the pattern of government that the *gaṇas* had. It seems that the public affairs were discussed, as a normal routine, before the whole house of the *gaṇa*. The author of the *Śāntiparva,* therefore, makes it very clear that the department of intelligence and the secret of the resolutions of state should remain in the hands of the president. It is not advisable that the whole body of the *gaṇas* should know those resolutions.[14]

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[14] "मन्त्रगुप्तिः प्रधानेषु चारश्चमित्र-कर्षण ।
न गणाः कृत्स्नशो मत्रं श्रोतुमर्हन्ति भारत ।।"
Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 24.

Council of the Elders: There used to be a council which included the 'elders-by-knowledge' and Bhīṣma says, "the leaders of the *gaṇas* are to be obeyed through the President".[15] The functions of the leaders of the *Gaṇa* were:—(1) "to assemble and adopt measures ensuring the welfare of the *Gaṇas*",[16] and (2) "the jurisdiction to conduct community should be mainly vested in them".

President: And over these elders would be the president of the state, "with whom should remain the secret of the resolutions of state", which means, the president would be the authority of the last resort, though he might be one of the elders only.

Equality in the Kula and Jāti:

And finally the author of *Śāntiparva* says, "there is universal equality, by birth (in the *gaṇas*) and also there is equality of *Kula*,[17] And as a result of this equality, they "cannot be broken up by prowess or *cleverness,* nor again by temptations of beauty. They can be broken up by enemies through the policy of division and subsidy only."

Meaning of equality in ancient Indian republics:

Here we get a characteristic feature of the ancient Indian republics. 'Equality' was a term used in a peculiar sense, in the ancient *gaṇa* states. In majority of the instances the *gaṇas* were organized on *kula*-basis or caste-basis. Equality was therefore granted to the *kulas* and not individuals. Thus "a *kṣatriya Grihapati* or *Kutumbin,* we do not hear of as having ever become a ruler. It is the head of a *Kṣatriya kula* or clan that attains to sovereignty."[18] Equality was not an easily attainable object for individual members of the *gaṇa*.

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[15] "तस्मान्मानयितव्यास्ते, गणमुख्याः प्रधानतः ।
लोकयात्रा समायत्ता भूयसी तेषु पार्थिव ॥"
Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 23.

[16] "गणमुख्यैस्तु सम्भूय कार्यं गणहितं मिथः ।
पृथग्गणस्य भिन्नस्य विततस्य ततोऽन्यथ ॥"
Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 25.

[17] "अन्योन्यं नाभिभाषन्ते तत् पराभव-लक्षणम् ।
जात्या च सदृशाः सर्वे कुलेन सदृशास्तथा ॥"
Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 30.

Old tradition of executive organ :

The executive organ of the *gaṇas* of the *Mahābhārata* was in agreement with the old tradition recommended by *Brihaspati* in his *'Vivādaratnākara'*, quoted by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar in his Carmichael lectures.[19] "What these verses tell us is that two, three or five members of a corporate body should be appointed as *'Mahattamas'* or chiefs and their counsels should be carried out by a *gaṇa*, craft-guild or village community." Thus it is obvious that the real executive lay in the hands of the *Gaṇa-Mukhyas* who again were many and not one. No single member of the *gaṇa* was thus by himself a ruler or *Rājan* in the proper sense of the term.

A comparison with its counterpart in Buddhist literature :

But we may pause here to compare and contrast the above analysis of the conditions of success of the *gaṇa*-states, with its counterpart in the Buddhist literature. At the first sight, it suggests some striking coincidence beween the two sets of texts. Both have said about honour to the deserving, practice of discipline and observance of good customs. There is, however, one important difference between the two groups of ideas.

"In the opinion of the Buddhist canonist, full and frequent assemblies as well as meeting together in concord and transacting business in concord constitute one of the vital conditions for the success of republics." By contrast the epic-writer, being convinced of the ignorance and passions of the masses, advises concentration of authority in the hands of the elite of the community, and more specially in those of the magistrates.

Tendency of centralization of power :

"The contrast then, is one between a policy of emphasis

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18. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures*, Ist series. Lect IV. p. 163.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

on the public-spirit and patriotism of the citizens and one of centralisation under the rule of the select few. It may also be held that this is in line with the course of contemporary history which witnessed a tendency of the republican states of this period to place themselves under the protection of individual leaders obviously for better defence against external aggression."[20]

And for the same reason Bhīṣma says, the prosperity or safety of a *gaṇa* will suffer, "which remains aloof from others, has severed itself from the confederacy or which is in strained relations with others.[21]

But Bhīṣma has shown greater anxiety for the internal danger than the external one for he says, "the internal danger is to be guarded against, the external one is insignificant. For the internal danger is destructive of the very foundations in no time."[22] And in the end the warrior-sage reminds once again that "the great safety of the *gaṇas* is considered to lie in the maintenance of a confederacy only".

Administration of law in the gaṇas:

A description of the *gaṇas* during the time of the *Mahābhārata* would not be complete without a word about the system of administration of law. Law-courts are the main bulwark of justice in a republican state, the guardians of the constitutional rights of the citizens and protectors of law and liberty. The success of a *gaṇa* depends therefore, upon the administration of law and justice as much as upon an ideal system of legislation and execution of policies.

Bhīṣma says in his discourse, "criminal justice should be administered promptly and by men learned (in law), through the President. If disputes arise in the *Kulas* and the Elders of the *Kulas* remain indifferent, they destroy the race (*gotra*) and dissolve the *gaṇa*."[23] Bhīṣma has emphasised, in his statement on the quickness of decision in criminal cases, where the life of a person is involved. Secondly, he has pointed towards the importance of the Elders of the *kula* in the administration of law and justice. The special importance given to the Elders of *kula* was because, "the Hindu law books recognise the laws of *kula-states* as well as those of *gaṇas*," says Dr. Jayaswal, and in order to substantiate his remark he quotes Yājñavalkya an author on Hindu law.

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[20] U.N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas,* Ch. 12. pp. 239-240.

[21] Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 25.

[22] Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 29.

The hierarchical system of courts :

This indicates that there used to be a *Kula-court* which was the court of the first instance. It had special significance in a *gaṇa* with a mixed constitution of aristocracy and democracy as also in confederations like that of the *Vajjians* or of the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis*.

Kula-courts : In the confederations or *gaṇas* with mixed constitutions the Elders of the *kulas* were represented in the *Kula-court*. It was a board of the *kulikas*, to investigate into criminal cases.

Gaṇa Court : Appeals from the *kula-courts* were forwarded to the *Gaṇa* court which was the next higher appellate court and *Mahābhārata* says that justice should be administered through the President, i.e., the punishment would be given in his name. Where the individual *gaṇas* had their own laws the right of hearing final appeal and to pass the final sentence rested with the president. We have already seen in the constitution of the *Saṁgha* of the *Licchavikas*, where the appeal was taken to the *Senāpati*, the *Uparājā* and finally to the *Rājā* or the president. A convict could hope for release till the last minute of the hearing in the court because no court could punish him if a single authority dissented. Thus, it is evident that all provisions were made in the *gaṇas* to follow the letters as well as the spirit of law and justice which exhorted praise from the Greek writers which is a valuable testimony about the good laws of Hindu republics.

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[23] "निग्रहः पण्डितैः कार्य्यः क्षिप्रमेव प्रधानताः ।
कुलेषु कलहा जाताः कुलवृद्धैरुपेक्षित : ॥"

Śānti Parva, Ch. 107, Sl. 27.

The Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi League :

We may now divert our attention to the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi* League, which is the solitary instance in the *Mahābhārata* in which we find many of the characteristic features and problems of *gaṇas,* discussed in chapter 107 of the *Śāntiparva.*

We are informed that *Vṛṣṇis* were the descendants of *Vṛṣṇi,* the younger brother of *Andhaka* and these two clans formed one *Saṁgha*—and that Kṛṣṇa as a *Saṁghamukhya* or chief represented the Vṛṣṇis, Babhru and Ugrasena represented the *Andhakas.* We further read that these clans included the *Yadavas, Kukuras, Bhojas* and so forth, that they each consisted of the two divisions of *Lokas* and *Lokesvaras.* This information finds its source in the *Mahābhārata*.[24]

Location and capital :

This league or confederation of the five *Yādava* communities was situated in the part of the country called Prabhās which comes within the modern Gujrat state. They had their capital in Dwārkāpuri. The constituent parts of the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi* league had differences within themselves with regard to national leadership, an account of which we read in chapter 82 of *Śāntiparva.* Sri Kṛṣṇa, the then President of the league, was however, keen to maintain unity of the federation and make it a powerful state but ultimately his efforts seem to have failed.

Coin evidence of the Vṛṣṇis :

We find in later records the name of the Vṛṣṇis as a *gaṇa-*

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[24] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lecture* No. IV. pp. 111-112. Also

"यादवाः कुकुरा भोजाः सर्वे चान्धकवृष्णायः ।
त्वय्यासक्ता महाबाहो लोका लोकेश्वराश्च ये ॥"
उपासते हि त्वद्बुद्धि भृषयश्चापि माधव ।

Śāntiparva, Ch. 81, Sl. 29½, (Gita Press Ed.)
(Ch. 82. Poona Ed. Reading '*Mādhavah*' for '*Yādavah*').

state without reference of the others. "At least two coins are known, the legends of which, as clearly read by Mr. A. V. Bergny, show that they belonged to the Vṛṣṇi *Gaṇa*."[25] Again we read in John Allan's "Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India" that an uncertain coin was found, which clearly showed that it was issued by some republican state, was a remarkable type. The legend in *Brāhmi* on the obverse and *Kharosthi* on the reverse, with slight dialectic differences, was transliterated by General Cunningham as :—

"Vrishni Rāja janagaṇasya bhubarasya".[26]

Vṛṣṇi is well known as the name of a people, *gaṇa* presents no difficulty. After much dilation Allan comes to the conclusion that we may translate it as: "Of the protector of the *Rājanya* or (warrior) tribe of Vṛṣṇis". The coin, they decided, belongs to the first century B. C. There remains no doubt this *Rājanya* or warrior tribe is the same community which enjoyed the privilege of having Kṛṣṇa as its leader during the Epic age. Due to their love of independence and efficient leadership they could maintain their identity as a republican principality as late as 1st century B.C. The reasons of the quick decadence of such an important federation, are found in chapter 82 of *Śānti-parva*. A disclose between Nārad and Vāsudeva presents the typical problems of a *gaṇa* or a confederation, which have also been brought to light in chapter 107 by Bhīṣma.

Particular type of difficulties among republics:

Vāsudeva relates to Nārada, the difficulties that have arisen in the affairs of the confederacy. The difficulty is the division of the leading men into a number of irreconcilable groups, accompanied by mutual animosity and recriminations.[27] These various leaders of the individual *gaṇas* had considerable fol-

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[25] D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lecture,* IV. p. 157.

[26] John Allan, *'Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,'* p. 281.

[27] Śāntiparva, Ch. 81 (Gita Press Ed.), Ch. 82 (Poona Ed.) Sl. 7—10.

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lowing behind them. And Sri Kṛṣṇa is grieved and worried like the mother of two brothers gambling with each other.[28]

Sri Kṛṣṇa was worried because he knew the consequences of keen partisan feeling and internal dissension, therefore he sought the advice of Nārada. Nārada analysed the situation and advised Kṛṣṇa, "that the real remedy does not consist in violent measures, but in a policy of conciliation.[29] Nārada suggested the policy of conciliation because the exercise of power would make the opposition stronger. Disrespect to the wise leaders and disunion amongst themselves would lead to the inevitable result of disintegration and destruction of the federation.[30] Nārada had strong faith in Kṛṣṇa's leadership and power of discretion, therefore he leaves the matter to him saying, he could adopt any method that would promote material prosperity of his own kinsmen.[31] This conversation between Nārada and Vāsudeva makes it quite perceptible that the Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis were a confederation, the constituent units of which were autonomous parts under their own leaders. Kṛṣṇa was the chief of the federation but he could not ride rough shod upon the will of the leaders of the autonomous units.

They had a federal council, consisting of all the elders, of the different parts of the *gaṇa* and Kṛṣṇa, as their *Mukhya*, had co-ordinating authority. We do not come across much detail about their constitution but it is understandable that this league was the last relic of the confederal type of *gaṇa* states. Hereafter we do not hear of such powerful states which played important role in the national politics.

Fate of republics during and after Mauriyan empire :

The beginning of the down-fall of *gaṇa*-polity had already started with Kautilya's imperialistic policy towards them.

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[28] "सोऽहं वितवमातेव द्वयोरपि महामते ।
एकस्य जयमाशंसे द्वितीयस्यापराजयम ॥" Ch. 82, Sl. 11.

[29] Śāntiparva, Ch. 82, Sl. 22.

[30] Śāntiparva, Ch. 82 Sl. 25.

[31] *Ibid.*, Ch. 82, Sl. 27.

"The ideal of Kautilya was possibly realized, for we have no positive evidence of the existence of these mighty corporations during the period of the Mauryas."[32] As a result of Kautilya's diabolical intrigues, the aristocratic and few democratic states in the neighbourhood of Magadha vanished for ever. But there is no doubt that independent political corporations reared up their heads again and some of them attained the highest pitch of greatness and glory.

It is true that we hear no more of *Licchavikas, Vṛijjikas, Śākayas* and *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇis* as forming republican confederations but their role is played by the *Mālavas*, the *Yaudheyas*, the *Arjunāyanas* and others. "So true it is that the individual dies but the spirit survives." The *Licchavis* indeed reappear in history in Nepal but under a monarchical form of government.[33] In spite of successive foreign invasions and the establishment of empires, a large number of indigenous states flourished in north India "during the long period of more than four centuries, (c. 100 B. C. to 300 A. D.) that elapsed between the decline of the first and rise of the second Magadha Empire. There were both kingdoms and non-monarchical states."[34] Numismatic evidence comes to our aid to prove the existence of numerous non-monarchical states before the rise of the Guptas.

The Arjunāyanas:

The *Arjunāyanas* ruled in the part of the country which now comprises the Bharatpur and Alwar states.[35] They grew in power after the Indo-Greeks but were subdued by the *Śakas*, They however recovered after the *Kuṣānas* till they were merged in the Gupta Empire. We come to know that they were a republican corporation from the coins they issued in the glory for the people. These coins belong to 1st century B. C. The

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[32] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 254.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[35] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India*, p. 251.

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full legend on these coins is "Victory of the Arjunāyana,"[36] a type of inscription found also on other coins, e.g., those of the *Yaudheyas.*

The Mālavas :

The *Mālavas* were the people with a glorious past. They were known from the time of the invasion of Alexander. Dr. R. K. Mookerji says, "the Indo-Greek expansion drove them to migrate to Rājputānā. They were the first to use the Vikrama Samvat of 58 B. C. Their capital in Rajputana was *Mālvanagara* (modern Nagar in Jaipur).[37] Dr. R. C. Majumdar also corroborates this view and adds a little more information about their recent past. He writes on the basis of an epigraphic record that the *Mālavas* fought against the *Śakas* in 2nd c. A. D.; the splendid victory of a *Mālava* chief brought back peace and prosperity to the country.[38]

Mālavan Coins :

Allan has recorded four different types of coins issued by the *Mālavas.* The inscription in *Prākrit* in all the types of coins is the same: i.e., *Mālavānāṁ jaya* with a different design on the reverse side. Some of their coins were found only with the name of the chiefs.[39]

The *Mālavas* are said to have extended their power over Maukhari *Mahāsenāpati Bala* who followed the *Krita* era of the *Mālavas.* In Allan's description of the 'small series of *Mālava* coins' we also read a little more of their history. He writes, "the provenance and epigraphy of the coins of the *Mālavas* show them occupying a limited area in Eastern Rajputana from the 2nd to the 4th c. A. D. (this agrees with the reference to them in the Allahabad inscription of Smudragupta). The similarity of the coin legends to those of the *Arjunāyans* and

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[36] John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India,* Pl. LXXXII. p. 121.

[37] R. K. Mookerji, *ut supra.*

[38] R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India,* p. 129.

[39] John Allan, *Catalogue of The Coins, of Ancient India,* Pl. Civ.

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Yaudheyas suggests that *Arjunayans* were not very remote from the *Yaudheyas* and were probably their neighbours on the north while the resemblance of their coins to those of the *Nāgas* suggests that the latter were their neighbours on the east . . ."

The Yaudheyas :

The *Yaudheyas* have figured prominently in the history of the *gaṇa* polity. Pāṇini called them *Ayudhajīvi-Kṣatriyas* who had a stronghold in the East-Punjab and also on some parts of U. P. and Rajputana. "They grew into power after the Indo-Greeks, only to be subdued by *Śakas* and the *Kuṣānas*. They were strong enough to challenge Rudradaman's authority.[40] Their earliest coins date from first century B. C." The coins both of silver and copper of the 2nd or 3rd c. A.D. bear the following legend: *"Bhagvatah Svāmino Brahmadevasya Kumārasya: Yaudheyānām"*.[41] Some coins bear the figure of gods and goddesses. A third class of *Yaudheya* copper coins of third and fourth century A. D. bear the legend *'Yaudheya-Gaṇasya-Jayah'*.

The *Yaudheyas* were divided into sections one of which was called *Matta-Mayurakas,* the name of a people whom Nakula conquered during his campaign against the lesser states.[42] Their abode was in present Rohtak.

The *Licchavis* were another powerful republic who had revived their power after long, though in a slightly modified form. There were few more smaller republics like the *Śibis, Kuṇindas* and *Audumbaras.*

The Śibis :

The *Śibis* first appeared in history as a neighbouring community of the *Kṣudrakas* and *Mallas* during Alexander's invasion. They have been described by the Greek writers as primitive people. They are said to have migrated later on to

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[40] Vijayagarh Inscription quoted by R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India,* p. 130.

[41] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India,* p. 253.

[42] *Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva,* Ch. 32. Sl. 5 (Ch. 29. Poona Ed.).

Rājputana. Some of their coins found in this region, bear the legend, '*Majhamikāya Śibi Janapadasa*', meaning, 'issued by the Śibi state from *Madhyamika*'. From the issue of the coins we can deduce that the *Śibis* were an organized political community amongst whom prevailed republican tendencies. This is proved by the issuing of coins in the name of the *Janapada*.

The Kuṇindas:

About the identity of the *Kuṇindas* as a republican organization, we cannot say anything positively because we hear about Amoghbhūti to be their king. If we are to take the coins for evidence, the coins issued by Amoghbhūti cannot be classed amongst those issued by the *Yaudheyas* or *Arjunāyans*. Hence we cannot be very definite about the form of this republic.

The Audumbaras:

This self-governing state was located in the eastern part of Kaṇgra, Gurudaspur and Hoshiarpur districts, and, according to Dr. R. K. Mookerji, were originally of the *Salya* tribe. Their coins can be classified into three groups, which were issued from first century B. C. to first c. A. D. In the first group of coins we find the legend, *Bhagavato Mahādevasya Rājrājasya*, which signified that they were worshippers of Mahādeva. The second group of coins bear the names of their early rulers and the third group of coins bear the figure of a *Śaiva* temple marked by a *Dhvaja*, a trident and a battle axe. These show that the *Audumbaras* in their later times were no more under any ruler.

The Vṛṣṇis:

The *Vṛṣṇis* of classical glory fell under the *Śakas* leaving behind a couple of coins to tell the story of their decadence. John Allan has described them as 'uncertain coins'. But from the legend, there remains no doubt that they were issued by the *Vṛṣṇis* who were left alone by their other counterparts to declare their faded glory. The coins issued by the *Vṛṣṇis* in the first c. B. C. bear the legend, *Vṛṣṇi Rājajanagaṇasya bhu-*

barasya, meaning thereby, "of the protector of the *Rājanya* or (warrior) tribe of *Vṛṣṇis*".

Informations thus obtained from the coins issued by the various people help us in drawing the conclusion that the period 150 B. C. to 350 A. D. was still a living period of Hindu republican polity. But the absence of any literary evidence desists us from knowing about their constitutions. We cannot contemplate about their legislative or administrative methods, neither can we state with conviction that they were sovereign republics. But their coins show that they were not governed by any monarch. They were self-governing people.

The result of their smallness :

The division of the country into a number of small kingdoms and republics proved to be the cause of their weakness and easy decline before the rising of the Guptas. The Gupta empire was easily built up over the small states, which could not be very strong internally because they were scattered all over the country. "The importance of their having ruled themselves lies in the fact that the people had become conscious of the advantages of local power."[43] "The older republics in the Punjab, however, paid the price which nature decrees from freedom to force. The smaller Punjab Republics under the *Mauryas* had become mere constitutions ; they had lost their biological constitution and retained the one of political phraseology : they were no more *Saṁghas,* but mere *gaṇas* : self-governments without states, states without power."

The doubtful entities :

The *Rājanya Janapada* and the *Mahārāja-janapada* fall under the category of uncertain *gaṇas.* They issued coins in the name of their territory and people and not in the name of any ruler. This alone cannot be taken to be enough evidence of their role as republican states. They inherited no legacy of a republic neither did they leave behind any. John Allan has said that no coins have yet been obtained, bearing the name of *Mahārājā.*

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[43] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient India,* Ch. XII,. p. 340.

Thus closes the chapter of the republican constitutions of this ancient country. But it does not close with a note of frustration, leaving behind a sense of defeatism. It has told us the long story of a few centuries, how the *gaṇas* strove to uphold the dignity of their race as well as the non-monarchical tradition. It also throws light upon the fact that the republican trend had spread its influence over the local administrative institutions even under monarchies.

CHAPTER VII

REPUBLICAN TRENDS IN THE NON-POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The account of political institutions of a country does not constitute the whole history of its people. Social, cultural and religious history, which is of much greater importance, far transcends political history in point of human interest. Our study of the republican trends in ancient India will remain incomplete if it leaves aside the study of such trends in the non-political organizations.

We have seen already that republican states made their sporadic debut as early as the days of the Buddha, and continued up to the early Gupta period. Besides these republican states, the cultural history of this long period records the existence of religious organizations which also showed clear republican tendencies.

Gautama Buddha and Mahāvīra, the founders of great religious organizations in 6th c. B.C., were born amongst people who practised republican ways in their political life. Śakyamuni had imbibed in his nature the republican spirit of his *Śakya* kinsmen and *Mahāvīra* was the successor of the same element that prevailed amongst the *Licchavis*. Of the two religious teachers the Buddha is known to have taken care to formulate definite rules for the Buddhist *Śramaṇas*. The instance of the schism within the Jaina Order, immediately after the death of Mahāvīra[1] alarmed him and inspired the Buddha to make further rules, which would take the form of a doctrine in his absence, strengthen the *Saṁgha* and save it from breaking into factions.

Absence of the principles of hegemony in Buddhist Saṁgha:

The history of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* shows that Gautama

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[1] *Pasādikā Suttanta,* 117, translated by T. W. Rhys Davids in *Dialogues of the Buddha*. Vol. IV. Pt. III of S. B. Buddhists.

Buddha's supremacy had been accepted during his own life time and the individual element was totally submerged in the corporate life of the *Saṁgha* thereafter. It is further clarified in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta,*[2] Ananda at Beluva, expresses the hope that the Tathāgata will, before his decease, leave some instructions regarding the *Saṁgha.* In his reply the Buddha strongly repudiates the idea of a successor to him leading the *Saṁgha,* and his words ring with an unwanted emphasis—"Be ye lamps to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast to the refuge to the truth. Look not refuge to any one besides yourself." The Buddha was strongly opposed to personal leadership, so much so that he repudiated his own recognized leadership. But immediately he realized the difficulty of the *Bhikkhus* of the *Saṁgha* and therefore addressed Ananda in the same Sutta —"It may be Ānanda, that in some of you the thought may arise, 'we have no teacher any more!' but it is not thus, Ānanda, that you should regard it. The truths (*Dhamma*) and the rules (*Vinaya*) which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the teacher to you." Thus we see that there was no provision, within the rules, for the supreme personal authority or a process of accession to the office of the permanent head of the Order.

Process of accession and principle of hegemony in Jainism:

In the Jaina records, on the contrary, we notice the presence of the principle of hegemony. The *Gaṇas, Kulas* and *Śākhās* that constituted the Order had different meanings from the traditional ones. According to Jacobi,[3] *Gaṇa* designates the school which is derived from one teacher; *Kula* the succession of teachers in one line; *Śākhā,* the line which branched off from one teacher. If we are to accept this enumeration, there prevailed no republican idea among the early Jaina community, the teacher was born in that atmosphere though.

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[2] *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta,* ii, 24—26. Translated by Rhys Davids.

[3] Quoted by Dr. S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism.* Ch. III, p. 114.

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Formation of religious Saṁghas common in ancient India :

The Buddha is often said to be the founder of the first Monastic Order. Dr. K. P. Jayaswal goes so far as to say that, "the history of the birth of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* is a history of the birth of the Monastic Order in the World."[4] But from the Buddhist literature we know that there was a tendency in ancient India, of forming *gaṇas* or organizations of the wandering monks of different sects. The *Parivrājaka* or the wandering man of religion who has absolved by his vow of renunciation from all social and domestic ties, retains the human elements in him. "The deep seated gregarious instinct of man is perhaps difficult to abjure. So among primitive *Parivrājakas,* sects and parties formed themselves. Groups called *Saṁghas* and *Gaṇas,* each recognizing the leadership of a spiritual head abounding among them."[5] We come across the story of Sanjaya,[6] the head of a *Saṁgha* of two hundred and fifty *Parivrājakas* and among them were *Sāriputta* and *Moggāllana.* When these two communicated to Sanjaya their desire of transferring their spiritual allegiance to the Buddha, Sanjaya offered to divide the leadership of the *gaṇa* with them. Thus we see that the birth of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was not the beginning of the history of monastic orders in the world. But certain it is that the characteristic features of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* give it a distinguished position, and a unique example is set in the world, of a religious organization, practising pure republican principles on the lines of its political counterparts.

Nature of Buddhist Saṁgha :

Dr. Beni Madhab Barua brings before us the true form of the Buddhist *Saṁgha.*[7] He says, "The Buddha life, the Buddha mind, the Buddha wisdom, the Buddha knowledge, the Buddha ideal and the Buddha spirit became embodied in the *dhammakāya* or the tangible form of the doctrine, the corpus of sacred texts which was to take the place of the Divine Master in his absence. The *Saṁgha* was the corporate body of holy persons who were the receivers of the great Doctrine, the most interested hearers of Buddha's words and inheritors of the *saddharma,* privileged, as custodians, embellishers and distributors of the priceless treasures."

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[4] K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Ch. VI. p. 42.

[5] Dr. Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism,* p. 61.

[6] *Mahāvagga,* 1, 23.

[7] B. M. Barua, *Lectures on Buddhism,* delivered in Ceylon, 1944. Lect. No. 6. p. 217.

The feeling of brotherhood in the Saṁgha:

Of the three chief elements of Buddhism, the Buddha, the *Dhamma* and the *Saṁgha,* the last one which comprised of the disciples and followers of the Buddha, played a significant role in the making of the long and eventful history of Buddhism. The men and women who renounced the world and accepted the Master as their teacher and guide were privileged to feel that they belonged to one and the same brotherhood under a loving father. They came from different social grades, belonged to different nationalities, spoke different dialects and represented different religious temperaments. A variety of intellect, imagination and spiritual nature were willingly merged in the common life of a single religious order to pass as the *Śākyaputtiya Samanas.*

Saṁgha formed on the principle of unity of purpose:

The *Saṁgha* was thus formed on the principle of the unity of purpose and ideal which can be compared to an ocean into which the various rivers lose themselves to assume the common name of the ocean. Thus the *Saṁgha* was a self-constituted body to be guided not by a person but by a common ideal of a virtuous life. "In a sense they appeared as redoubtable knights of the Round Table of King-Arthur."[8]

Principle of equality in the Śaṁgha:

The *Saṁgha* admitted all, irrespective of caste or creed. "The Buddha carried the principle a step further by including the *Śūdras* within his church."[9] Some exceptions were bound to be there e.g., a diseased person, such as a leper or a consumptive, a misconduct or one in the service of the court.

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[8] B. M. Barua, *Ceylon Lect.* No. 6, p. 226.

[9] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* Ch. IV, p. 289.

All adults over twenty years of age, from whatever walk of life they came, were formally initiated by the *Saṁgha* and were taken in. Once they became members of the Order they enjoyed full and equal rights to participate in the assembly meetings and exercise their right of voting. The principle of equality raised the status of the insignificant and the unimportant in the *Saṁgha*. Large numbers came and joined the Order but all were not destined to reach the goal which in their mental purview was *Ārhatship;* many indeed lagged behind. But those who lived unnoticed, behind the multitude, were not minimised in any respect. The teeming millions were the real power behind those who came into prominence and helped forward the cause of Buddhism.

Extent of liberty in the Saṁgha:

The ideal of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was total self-abnegation intermingled with the ideal of liberty, emancipation or final release from all the conceivable states, forms and degrees of bondage. The Master has given this freedom a spiritual definition. He has defined freedom as a free state of consciousness of the mind or will. But freedom had the physical aspect also and that becomes clear when he distinguishes it from bondage.

A slave or a 'hireling', as he describes him, is a person, who is not under his own will, who is completely under the will of his master, who is unable to exercise his free will, while the condition of a freeman is just the reverse. "Buddha heartily accepted the Indo-Aryan maxim that all that is controlled by circumstances other than one's own will is woe and all that is under the control of one's will is weal."[10] From the writings of the later Buddhists we can clearly understand that freedom in the physical aspect of life was given adequate importance and was in no way considered less significant than freedom in the spiritual sphere of life. A person's capacity for voluntary and hearty participation in the joys of life was considered as a test of freedom and the lot to work under compulsion and constant threat as that of bondage. Thus we land safely on the ground that the ideal of unity of purpose was in no way repugnant to the ideal of liberty of the mind and body.

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[10] B. M. Barua, *Ceylon Lectures* No. VIII, p. 275.

Basis of the Saṁgha :

Here we are confronted with the inevitable question, whether the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was a natural organism, a simple community of faith based on spiritual allegiance among its members or was there any external bond of union, e.g., a distinguishing sign, or the common observance of distinctive rites or any special body of regulations etc. ? The distinction is just like that between a tribe and an artificial organization in the form of a state.

The 'Dhamma' was not mere philosophy or creed :

We find an answer to this in the great mass of rules formulated by the Buddha himself, categorized later in the Nikāyas, summed up in the *Mahaparinibbāna Suttanta* and included later in the category of the *Bodhapakkhiyā Dhamma*. But this *Dhamma* that bound together with *Saṁgha* of which the Buddha was the *Satthā* was not mere philosophy or creed, it had a practical ethical bearing stressed everywhere. Rules of moral conduct are associated with the faith. But these rules of conduct were not rules intended to serve as distinctive rules for a religious order. They relate to right conduct generally as understood by the *Parivrājakas*. Analogous rules occur even in St. Benedict's *Instruments of good works.*

The rules of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* were developing through a constant process of growth. After the *Dhammika-Sutta*, which were general rules of conduct for a Buddha Bhikkhu, the *Vinaya* must have evolved to give a binding character and authority to the rules by adopting them as the regulations of the Buddhist Order. The well-known councils, the first of which was held in Rājgrha, is pointed by Mrs. T. W. Rhys Davids as, "the mother settlement", where measures were being taken in the business of the recording, to dress up that lonely resting place of the twin *Sāl* trees in the imperial robes of a superman's passing.[11] At the first Council, the theory of the promulgation of laws was accepted by the monks. Each new rule adopted afterwards, was covered by the same theory.

Development of the federal form of the Saṁgha:

During the Buddha's life time there had grown up a community of his followers, a *Saṁgha,* founded by him and described by him as the *Chaturdik Bhiksu Saṁgha* (*Saṁgha* of the four-quarters). Admission to it was open to all castes and localities. In due course of time the original *Saṁgha* underwent divisions and sub-divisions. Along with this division we notice the beginning of the idealization.

In later times the *Saṁgha* simply meant a body of resident monks at a particular monastery and *Chaturdik Bhiksu Saṁgha* meant an ideal confederation of the *Saṁghas* of all the four directions of the country.[12] And from the inscriptional evidence we learn that donations were formally made to this confederation which was considered as an ideal entity. And Dr. Sukumar Dutt writes in his 'Early Buddhist Monachism' that this sublimation of the *Saṁgha* from a human reality to an ideal concept is a traceable process. In the *Cetokhila-Sutta* a Bhikkhu is enjoined to have faith in *Satthā, Dhamma, Saṁgha* and the fourth is the *'Sikkhā'*.

The process of development shows that the Buddhist *Saṁgha* existed originally as a sect of the *Parivrājaka* community and it rested on the basis of a common ideal and religious purpose and had at first no special rules of its own. The Buddha formulated the fundamental rules and gave them to the *Śramaṇas.* It is difficult to say at what point of time, but certainly at a very early part of its history, the sect transformed into the *Catuddisa Bhikkhu-Saṁgha,* devised an external bond of union, which was called *Pātimokkha,*[13] and emerged as an impressive religious confederation.

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[11] Mrs. Rhys Davids, *A Manual of Buddhism*, p. 261.

[12] S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, Ch. III, p. 69.

[13] *Pātimokha* was a ceremony intended for monks alone, relating to *'Moksha'* i.e., freedom.

Vinaya-Pitaka the Source of Democratic Rules:

An examination of the constitutional structure and the functions of the various organs of the *Saṁgha,* will show how far the ideals of a democratic-republican-federation were practised in the Buddhist *Saṁgha.* The first four chapters of the *Mahāvagga* of *Pāli* text of *Vinaya-Pitāka* give the rules of discipline for the *Saṁgha.* These rules when synthesised, give a well-knit system of a democracy which did not certainly come by accident, but as a matter of policy, being already in vogue in the confederacies of the *Śākyas,* the *Koliyas,* the *Mallas,* the *Vajjis,* from which were largely drawn the members of the *Bhikkhu Saṁgha.*

These rules were brought into force by the assembly of the *Bhikkhus* of the Order. At the end of every chapter of the *Mahāvagga,* we find the question put to the Assembly, by the reader, whether the honourable members agreed with the laws. After their being passed by the whole house they became the laws for the *Saṁgha.* This leads us to call the system of government, thus formed, as the government of the *Bhikkhus,* for the *Bhikkhus* and by the *Bhikkhus.*

This democracy was based on adult franchise conditioned only by few qualifications. (1) The aspirant should have a standard of education. (2) The training obtained, should be according to certain rules of discipline under learned *Bhikkhus.*

The two parts of the Buddhist Church:

As said earlier, the Buddhist Church was a democratic-republican-federation, which consisted of two parts: (1) the various local units or *Saṁghas,* and (2) the Great Buddha, co-ordinating them as a central authority. But the noticeable absence of a central authority, representing the local units, was the remarkable gap in the organization which proved to be its main weakness. The Buddha had nominated no successor either to co-ordinate the constituent elements of the *Saṁgha* after Himself.

The Council:

A general council used to be summoned from time to time, to act as the central authority, to formulate or interpret laws for the entire federation.[14] It was the only organization, under the circumstances, that was most effective in maintaining the traditions of an undivided church. We hear of four such councils having been held, out of which the one held at Veśāli, of which some details are available, may be taken as the type of the rest. The councils were however not like the Federal-Legislature whose decisions could change the fate of the local units. They were not enough powerful to stop schisms either. In any case, these councils kept alive, for sometime at least, the traditions of an undivided church.

The Government of the Saṁgha :

The *Saṁgha* constitution bore deep impressions of the republican constitution of the states around which came under the influence of Buddhism and from where, in early times, Buddhist *Bhikkhus* were largely recruited. Many of their free institutions, such as the deliberative assembly, the legislative procedure, the voting system, the committee system and the popular tribunals were transplanted in the *Saṁgha*.

The Assembly :

For the conduct of the affairs of each local *Saṁgha*, i.e., its deliberations, trials for offences and deciding matters in a state of emergency, the assembly was vested with supreme power.[15]

Composition : The '*Āvāsa*' or the republican colony of the Buddhist *Bhikkhus* had a system of self-government under an assembly. This assembly was based on adult-suffrage, i.e., every duly qualified member had an equal right of participation in its affairs.

Main purpose of the assembly :

Any transaction which related to the *Saṁgha* in its collective or corporate life was called a *Saṁgha-Kamma*. A *Saṁgha-Kamma* was hedged in by constitutional rules, the meticulous observance of which settled the validity of the act or transaction. The assembly was authorised to conduct all that was comprehended within the term *Saṁgha-Kamma*.

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[14] Such laws were not binding upon the local *Saṁghas*, because each of them had their local assemblies.

[15] There occurred an emergency in the republic of the *Śākyas* during the invasion of 'Vidudhaka'. The vital question, whether the gates of the capital should be opened or not, was deliberated upon by the assembly. Votes were taken over this question.—*Rockhill's Life of the Buddha*, p. 119.

Generally, two types of matters were brought before the Assembly: (a) disciplinary and disputatious, and (b) non-disciplinary and non-disputatious; and the third type of matters discussed in the assembly may be classed among (c) anomalous matters.

Besides the particular types of affairs dealt by the assembly, rules had also been laid down regarding the procedure or the method of transacting business, abrogating which, the decisions would be declared invalid.

Assembly meetings and process of deliberations :

A complete assembly, for the purpose of all *Saṁgha* matters was necessary, except for certain matters particularly mentioned. But as the common practice in the large assemblies goes, the whole house would hardly ever congregate, therefore quorums had been decided for different types of deliberations. These differed from four to twenty. In the first instance the rules say:—

(i) Four for all acts except—*Upasampadā, Pavarānā* and *Abbhāna*.
(ii) Five for all acts except *Upasampadā* in border countries and *Abbhāna*.
(iii) Ten for all acts except *Abbhāna*.
(iv) Twenty for all other acts.

The *Vinaya* rules prescribe where the quorum is not complete and a necessary *kamma* (karma) has to be done, an outsider is permitted, as an exceptional case, to go to the place where he is wanted and act as a *ganapuraka*.

The President :

For the conduct of the sessions of the assembly a learned and virtuous person, from amongst the members, would be appointed *ad hoc,* as President. But his office was strictly representative, because in an early Buddhist *Saṁgha* there was no provision for an abbot or a hereditary chief.

Powers and Functions of the President :

The President was charged with a mission and he took it upon himself properly. He did, in the business of the *Saṁgha,* what he was asked by the *Saṁgha* to do. The powers of the President enumerated in the *Mahāvagga* remind us of the powers of the speaker of the British House of Commons who could hear as the house allowed him and say just the little what the house allowed him to say. The *Mahāvagga* says in the same tune, "when a number of Bhikkhus despatch him some where, he obeys their command, but he does not think thereupon, 'it is I who do this'."[16] The whole *corpus* of *Vinaya-Pitaka* refuses to acknowledge the idea of a paramount authority of a person, a recognized head, a spiritual boss or a *gaṇadhara*. The idea was entirely foreign to the constitution of a Buddhist *Saṁgha*.

Powers and Functions of the Assembly :

The assembly was vested with powers regarding executive, deliberative as well as judicial matters.

Powers of Appointment : (1) The assembly appointed the president from amongst its own members. (ii) The assembly had the right to make all other appointments as required by time and work. We come across an example in *Vinaya-Pitaka*[17] in which Darbha-Mallaputtra expressed his desire to take up the charge of making internal arrangements of the *Saṁgha*. The Buddha was staying at that time in *Venubana-Kalāndak-Nivāp*. The Master considered the request and put it before the whole house for approval. According to the *Saṁgha* rules no appointment was valid unless it was approved by the whole house.

In this meeting of the assembly, we hear that Darbha-Mallaputtra was elected for this office, through proper procedure. This instance indicates that almost all offices of the *Saṁgha* were elective.

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[16] *Mahāvagga*, X. 63.

[17] *Vinaya Pitaka, Smriti Vinaya*, p. 395.

(iii) *Legislative Powers*: During the life-time of the Buddha, he was the supreme law-maker, but the laws thus made were passed into acts by the consent of the whole house of the assembly.

Method of Legislation: We find in the *Samathā-khandhaka* of *Vinaya-Pitaka* that all laws had two stages:—(a) Ñātti i.e., resolution and (b) *Anussāvana,* which is also known as *Kammavācā* (=proclamation of the proposed act). Again, the rules laid down in *Mahāvagga* makes four conditions necessary for all resolutions to be proposed and proclaimed.[18] It says:

(a) For the proposal of a resolution the presence of the quorum was compulsory.

(b) It was also necessary that all the absentees conveyed their consent by *Chhanda* or absentee vote (proxy).

(c) Third came the state of *Ñātti* in the given manner.

(d) Fourthly and finally came the stage of *Kammavācā* or proclamation of the law, once or thrice according to the gravity of the subject.

After the resolution was thus put before the assembly once or thrice, members were expected to give their opinion. If they kept silent, their silence was taken for their consent after the third reading. In cases there was a division of opinion into 'yes' and 'Nays,' the decision of the majority prevailed. Voting was in regular procedure of the house, therefore the house appointed a Collector of votes.

Committee System: All matters which were of complicated and disputable nature, and when in a meeting *Bhikkhus* started passing confusive remarks, matters were referred to special committees. These committees were appointed by the house itself and they comprised of virtuous, experienced and elderly *Bhikkhus,* who had specialized knowledge of the matter under dispute. If the committee failed to settle the question, it handed it back to the *Saṁgha* assembly which settled it by majority vote.

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[18] *Mahāvagga,* IX. 3, 9.

Two systems of voting were practised in the *Saṁgha*, public voting and secret voting. The members of the *Saṁgha* were acquainted with both.

Disciplinary Functions: The assembly was charged with the responsibility of taking disciplinary actions against all defaulters. It functioned almost like a court of justice and followed the same procedure that a court should follow. The *Saṁgha* assembly rules permitted leave of appeal to the person charged for misconduct or misbehaviour of flouting laws of the *Saṁgha*.

The person charged by the *Saṁgha* assembly was provided the facility of speaking in self-defence. After a regular hearing a sentence was generally passed by the vote of the majority of the house.

Functions regarding Non-disputatious Matters: Among the various democratic ways and institutions of the *Saṁgha*, we hear of the observance of the *Uposatha*-Ceremony. It was an old institution changed largely, since its inception. The institution came to mean with the *Bhikkhu* community, in the later developed stages, 'assembling together in a special manner,' which made for unity among its members.

The assembly used to conduct the *Uposatha* and ask one *Bhikkhu* to recite the *Pātimokkha*. All the members of the *Āvās* had to stand together. If a member failed to join the ceremony due to serious illness, he could send his *chanda* or if the assembly decided, the *Uposatha* could be held outside the *Saṁgha* premises where the sick member lay.

Importance of Uposatha: This ceremony of *Uposatha* brought uniformity and feeling of oneness amongst different *Saṁghas* which quickly grew up in large numbers all over India, especially in the north. Each local *Saṁgha* held the *Uposatha* ceremony within their own jurisdiction which strengthened the bond of unity and fraternity in the brotherhood. The assembly, the supreme authority in all the jurisdictions of the life of the *Bhikkhus* thus decided everything for the *Saṁgha* by majority vote.

Advanced Systems of Voting:

The advanced methods of voting as practised within the

Buddhist *Saṁghas* show the height of political achievement of the republic, whence came the republican trends into the non-political organizations.

In the *Samathakhandaka* section of *Vinaya-Pitaka,* we find definite terms for such words as a vote, a ballot paper, a candidate and different systems of voting. Some of them are as follows :—

(i) *Sammantraṇa*=Election.
(ii) *Śalākāgrahāpak*=Collector of voting tickets.
(iii) *Adhārmika Śalākāgrah*=A disqualified voter.
(iv) *Sakarṇa-Jalpak Śalākāgrah*=Secret voting by whispering into ear.
(v) *Vivritak Śalākāgrah*=Open voting.
(vi) *Yebhuyyaśika*=Vote of the majority.

In the *Saṁgha* administration, the opinion of the majority was given importance. Almost all affairs were decided by the majority opinion. This may induce us to form an impression that the Buddhist *Saṁgha* would allow the rule of majority over the minority or the weaker group of opinion.

Place of Minority in the Buddhist Saṁgha:

In the teachings of the Buddha and the laws he formulated for the *Saṁgha,* we do not find the slightest infringement of individual liberty. Individual opinion was given its proper value even when it was brought forth through the minority group. In the practice of the *Saṁgha* rules we find a unique example of adjustment and co-existence of individual liberty and force of collective entity. It postulated a perfect balance of power of the individual and that of the bulk of the majority in the *Saṁgha.* Thus the *Saṁgha* became an indomitable, almost an invincible organization, which worked wonders during a long range of time in the ancient history of India.

Seals and Sealings of the Saṁgha:

Buddhist *Saṁgha* functioned almost like an autonomous republican state. It is interesting to note that the Buddhist *Saṁghas* issued numerous inscribed clay seals. Vogel's findings near Kasia brought to light no less than 464 seals bearing the legend *Sri-Mahāparinirvāṇa-vihāre bhikṣusañghasya.* His reading has also been accepted by eminent Indian authorities of the field.[19]

Clay-sealings have been found in Intwa near Junagarh in Saurashtra. The inscription on these sealings refer to the congregation of friars at the monastery of king Rudrasena who built it in early 3rd c. A. D. The inscription is, *Mahārājā-Rudrasena Vihāre bhiksusanghasya.*[20]

Some more sealings have been found in Koshambi in Allahabad district which refer to the congregation of monks of the Ghositarama *Saṁgha.*[21] The sealings found in Sārnāth refer to the monastic life of Sārnāth and the seal of the congregation at the *Ārogya-Vihāra* signifies that there was a monastery which looked after the sick and the ailing monks of the *Saṁghas.*

These various seals prove that the Buddhist *Saṁghas* were autonomous bodies whose right of using their own seals was recognized by the state laws as well as the laws confirmed by the Councils. The autonomy that was sanctioned to all the local *Saṁghas* led to disintegration of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* feeling. The incident took place at Koshambi in the Ghositarama monastery regarding the expulsion of a *bhikshu.* One group pressed for his expulsion from the monastry while another defended his conduct and ranged themselves against the decision.[22] The Master was reported about the cleavage. He was alarmed by the news and exclaimed, "the *Bhikkhu Saṁgha* is divided, the *Bhikkhu Saṁgha* is divided." He proceeded to the place of the occurrence of the incident and tried to compose their differences with no result.

Though the Buddha knew that the incident would be followed by many more, he adhered firmly to the republican principles. He reiterated the merits of decentralization of power, collegial sovereignty and the rule of the majority. The conclusion, that in creating the confederation of monks the Buddha was making a striking departure from the institutions by which he must have been surrounded, is a right one. "He was, as it were, establishing a republic in the midst of monarchies."[23]

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[19] R. K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India,* pp. 113-14. Footnote.

[20] *Epigraphica Indica*: Vol. XXVIII, pp. 174-75. Article by B. C. Chhabra about Rudrasena.

[21] J. P. H. Vogal, *Journal of Ceylon Branch of Royal Asiatic Soc.* New Series, Vol. I. pp. 27—32.

[22] *Mahāvagga*: X, 1—5.

The *Saṁgha* adhered to the republican ideals because to the *Shakyaputtiya-Śramaṇas,* concord was almost synonymous with purity itself. "It would therefore be," says Professor Gokuldas De, "not unreasonable to ascribe to the authors of ancient Indian democracy, of which the *Saṁgha* government was only a special form made suitable for the monks, the belief, be it fundamental or not, that truth and purity lay in harmony and unity."[24] These derivations were based on deep studies of the Buddhist monasteries, no part of which can be put at a discount.

Republican Trends in Trade Guilds:

The tendency of uniting and organising into *Saṁghas* was not the characteristic feature of religious sects alone. When we turn our eyes towards the economic conditions of the times of the Buddha and the following years, we find that traders also united and formed guilds on the basis of unity of economic interests. Certain factors helped indeed, in the growth of such guilds based on common trade and craft.

Factors Helping the growth of Trade Guilds:

Agriculture was no more the only source of livelihood We have seen that the population of the *Śākyan* republic comprised of artisans of various types, besides the agriculturists. Craftsmen and producers had increased their production by improved methods and they began to produce surplus material for export. Thus they had freed themselves from entire dependence upon the agriculturists.

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[23] H. S. Gaur, *Spirit of Buddhism,* p. 243.

[24] Gokuldar De, *Democracy in Early Buddhist Saṁgha,* Ch. II, p. 83.

Secondly, the mobility of the people had become frequent and easy due to improved conditions of roads and greater security during the journey. Due to satisfactory means of communication and transport, intercourse between traders and craftsmen had also increased and as a natural consequence of this, newer methods of a variety of crafts started flourishing in the country.

Purpose of Forming Trade-guilds:

Another advancement made by the traders in various crafts was the formation of guilds and corporations in their respective trades. The purpose of forming these guilds or corporations was to look after the protection and development of their respective crafts. These guilds or corporations were called *Nigama, Saṅgha, Śreṇi, Puga* and *Nikāya*.[25]

Richard Fick confirms this information in his "Social Organization in North-East India"[26] when he writes, "the existence of trade associations which grew partly for economical reasons, better employment of capital, facilities of intercourse partly for protecting the legal interests of their class, is surely to be traced to an early period of Indian culture." When we read in the *Dharmasûtras* that the *agriculturists*, tradesmen, cattle-breeders, usurers (*Kusidin*) and manufacturers had their own special laws for their class which were authoritative for the king, we can infer, with some certainty, that the trade organizations made their respective guilds. Fick quotes Manu (VIII. 41) where we find that the king had merely to examine and determine the laws of the guilds.

The *Śreṇis* or corporations have been attributed political significance in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*. In chapter III of Book V, the chiefs of military corporations have been classed among other government servants.[27] Provision was made for their subsistence from the royal exchequer. Kautilya adds importance to the troops of the *Śreṇis,* as much as he adds to the hereditary troops, troops belonging to a friend or to an enemy and wild tribes. He says that corporation of soldiers can be trusted to march against the enemy and defend the country when the king has to be absent only for a short time or the enemy's army consists mostly of soldiers of corporations or the enemy is desirous of carrying on treacherous fight rather than an actual war.[28] This treatment given to the forces of the *Śreṇis* shows that they had acquired a special recognition in the social as well as political sphere during Kautilya's time. "Some verses in *Mahābhārata* enjoin upon a king to avail himself of *Śreṇivala* which is said to be equal in importance to hired soldiers. *Rāmāyaṇa* also refers to *Śayo-dha-Śreṇi* while the military aspect of the guilds is clearly evident from the Mandasor inscription."[29]

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[25] Nalinaksh Dutt and K. D. Bajpai, *Development of Buddhism in U. P.*, Ch. II, p. 29.

[26] Richard Fick, *Social Organization in North-East India*, Chap. 10, p. 267. (Trans. by Shishir Kmr. Maitra).

[27] Kautilya, *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. V. Ch. III. Translation by Shamśastry, p. 277.

The *Jatakas* refer to eighteen guilds. The number may be taken as a conventional one but it surely hints at the plurality of trade organizations. From the other sources, we get a list of twenty-seven guilds of different trades. This list consists of guilds of traders ranging from that of ivory-workers to the guilds of butchers, robbers, free-booters and forest police who guarded the caravans.[30] The paucity of materials makes it impossible to trace the detailed history of the guilds mentioned in the list.

Some more names of trade guilds, such as those of ship-cargo-tradesmen, of a caravan whose leader Satthavâha, goes from the east to the west with 500 wagon loads and then returns, are also available. Names of certain cotton-traders, mentioned in *Tuṇḍila Jātaka* and the horse traders of the west are also well known.[31]

Various kinds of trades had also flourished during the times of Pāṇini, which are often mentioned as *Silpas.* They are as follows: *Kulāla* (potter), *Takshā* (carpenter), *Dhanushkara* (a maker of bows), *Khanaka* (miner), *Tantuvāya* (Weaver), *Kambala-kāraka* (blanket-maker),[32] etc.

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[28] *Ibid.,* Bk. IX. Ch. II. pp. 370-71.

[29] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* pp. 29-30.

[30] *Ibid.,* pp. 18-20.

[31] Fick, *Social Organization in North-East India,* p. 273.

Śrenis autonomous bodies :

The traders in these various trades organized themselves into guilds or *Śrenis* and from details available we can infer that these *Śrenis* were autonomous bodies. They had their own rules and regulations, which the political head of the state had only to reinforce.

Although details about their internal organization are not available yet the "three conditions", says Fick, "local division of different kinds of work, hereditary character of branches of profession and the existence of an elder, seem to indicate clearly an organization of handicraft which can be compared in many respects with our corporations in the Middle-Ages."[33] Besides the rules of the *Śreṇis* and their organizational head, they had power to issue their own coins, seals and use their own seals and sealings. In recent Kauśāmbi excavations, coins have been found which bear the name of a *gaṇdhika* guild or the *Śreṇi*. The lengend, *gandhikānām* signifies that it was a corporate body of traders dealing in perfumes.[34]

Numerous seals and sealings issued by North Indian guilds or corporations in different localities and at various times stand as a proof of their autonomous organization. The seal-die of terra-cotta discovered in the excavations conducted by Sir John Marshall at Bhīta, near Allahabad, on which he reads the legend, '*Śahijitiya nigamasa*' with letters of the third or perhaps fourth century B. C. accepted to be the earliest of such seals.[35]

In the findings of Sir John, we read about a die at the foundation of a house which he designated as the "house of the guild" and remarked that the house in which the seal was discovered might have been the site of the office of the *nigama* or corporation.[36] Dr. R. K. Mookerji cites examples of numerous seals which throw light upon the various types of guilds during the Imperial Gupta kings. The most numerous (class) among the seal inscriptions is that referring to the corporations or guild (*nigama*) of bankers (*Sreṣthin*), traders (*Sārthavāha*), and merchants (*kulika*). These are combined with some other seals which give the names of private individuals, who were themselves traders, merchants, or bankers, and probably were members of those guilds. It will not be very surprising to hear one day that these had been organizations in ancient India, very similar to the modern chamber-of-commerce. It is neither totally incredible that there existed such corporations at big trade centres of Upper India. Such trade guilds or corporations were autonomous corporate bodies, exercising the right of making laws for their internal organization and also the right of issuing coins and using their own seals and sealings. On plate III of Cunningham's *Coins of ancient India* we find legends inscribed on coins found in Taxila, which prove that they were struck by trade-guilds and were of the nature of mercantile guild-tokens.[37]

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[32] V. S. Agarwala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, Ch. IV, pp. 230-32.

[33] Fick, *Social Organization on North-East India*, p. 284.

[34] K. D. Bajpai, *Authority of Minting Coins in Ancient India*, Journal of Numismatic Society of India. Vol. 25. March, 1963.

[35] R. K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India*, p. 111.

Organization of the Śreṇis:

The number of members of the Śreṇis was not fixed. At the head of each Śreṇi, there used to be a president who was called *Pamukha* (*pramukha*), the official designation was of course *Jetthaka* (Jyeṣthaka). We also come across such names as '*Kammārājeṭṭhaka*', '*Mālākārājeṭṭhaka*', *Vaḍḍukijeṭṭhaka*.'[38] Even the corporation of robbers had their own *Jeṭṭhaka*. At another place we read names of two *Jeṭṭhakas* of one carpenters' corporation consisting of one thousand members. They were perhaps one over each five hundred. At several places in Buddhist literature the head of the guild is called *Seṭṭhi*.

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[36] Arch. Surv. Annual Report, 1911-12. p. 47.

[37] Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India*, Pl. III, p. 63.

[38] *Jataka* No. 387, 415 and 466.

The importance and status of the Seṭṭhis:

The *Seṭṭhis* or the *Jeṭṭhakas* had often an important voice in the matters of administration of the country. They rendered considerable assistance to the ruler in implementing important economic and developmental plans of the state.

The *Seṭṭhis* mostly stood in close proximity to the royal court because they helped the ruler in the following ways:

(i) They helped the king in the management of the finances.

(ii) They used to help the administration in paying the army and the officials, for military operations, public buildings, etc.

(iii) They obviously played an important role in advising the king when he had to deal with the affairs of trade of the land. Here we find the *Jeṭṭhaka* acting in a double capacity. He acts as the head of the trading community and being the head of the community of a particular trade, he is deputed by the king to exercise power on behalf of the royal authority. Richard Fick rightly remarks, "in any case he seems by virtue of his immense wealth to have become indispensable to the king, as we find him constantly in his retinue."

From the *Jātakas* we also learn that some of these *Seṭṭhis* used to be appointed to high offices in the royal court. We are told in the *Jātakas,* two presidents of Kośala were holding the esteemed position of ministers of the state. At another place the President of the guild of iron-smiths has been called king's favourite. Another *Jeṭṭhaka* was made the treasurer of the kingdom.[39]

Anuseṭṭhis and Uttara Seṭṭhis:

A detailed description of their method of working tells us that in the absence of the *Seṭṭhis,* their duties were performed by *Anuseṭṭhis* and *Uttara Seṭṭhis.* Due to the powers enjoyed in the royal court, they also enjoyed an honourable posi-

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[39] *Uraga Jātaka,* I, 154.

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tion in the society. Some of the *Seṭṭhis* who have been referred to quite often in the *Jātakas*, were Anathpindika, Mrigadhara, Yaśa, Mendaka and Dhananjaya.

Cause of their popularity:

The trade guilds and their headmen were given a respectable position in the society because the traders of this period used to donate magnificent amount of wealth for public and philanthropic work, such as, for temple building, hospitals and educational institutions.

Śreṇis in South India:

The military corporations or the *Kṣatriya-Śreṇis*, mentioned by Kautilya subsisted for a long time, at least in southern India, as late as the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. *Velaikkaras* were a community, consisted of various working classes such as the *Velangai*, *Idangai*, etc., and is frequently referred to in the Tanjore inscriptions of the *Chola* kings, as a part of the name of the different regiments composing the *Chola* army. They also migrated to Ceylon and were employed as mercenaries by Sinhalese kings at this period. Dr. Majumdar informs us that the Velaikkara army took a vow to protect the relic temple constructed for the sacred tooth of Jina, at the command of the king Vijayabahu.[40]

Thus we see that the guild organization had developed into a highly important factor in state politics in northern as well as in southern India after the Christian Era. The economic corporations had become a definite part of the state fabric. Their authority was upheld by that of the state, because they proved to be the important financial support for the state. Their prestige and status considerably enhanced by the definite proclamation of the state policy to guarantee their successful existence by affording in all timely need and assistance.

Roughly speaking, the *Śreṇis* have served the functions of modern banks, have raised powerful troops for kings, the *Śreṇi-Mukhyas* have performed the functions of advisers to the kings and protectors of the interests of the traders. This variety of performance of duties won them the reputation of essential factor of state fabric through the ages. The long heritage of corporate activities in the economic life of ancient India shows that the republican spirit crossed the political boundary and engulfed the economic aspect of life also.

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[40] R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 32-33.

Republican trends in education :

The ancient system of education, as preserved in the accounts of Pāṇini, was marked for some of its original features. First of all we notice that education was no more individualistic or restricted within the jurisdiction of *'kulas'*. In the second instance we find that institutions of various kinds had developed in the country through which learning and culture were promoted. These institutions were not isolated or out of touch with the life of the community. These highly developed organizations worked as parts of the entire cultural atmosphere of the country. The total organization of life consisted of typically Indian institutions which were known as *Kula, Gotra, Charaṇa* and *Parishad.*

Gotra: When we examine these institutions we find, *Kula* had lost its significance and *Gotras* were struggling hard to retain their original form and importance. Gotra has been defined as, "a system of relations upon community of ancestors....The joint membership in any given Gotra seems to have been determined less on the grounds of mere physical descent than on those of spiritual connection and inheritance."[41] These Gotras or corporations could not remain as such for ever. It could no more protect its exclusive property of knowledge within its narrow limits but had to throw it open to the community in the interest of the growth of culture and education.

Charaṇas or federated form of Gotras :

The *Gotras* were federated together to give birth to the synthesised institution known as the *Charaṇa*. This new institution was organized on the basis of unity of purpose and not unity of blood or relationship. Its membership constituted of different *Gotras* with their particular culture and traditions now united to widen their culture. The *Charaṇa* thus indicated a spiritual relationship, an ideal fellowship. Every member-student of a *Charaṇa* thus had a double realationship what Pāṇini calls *Vinaya-Yoni-Sambandha,* relationship in learning and blood. Thus the *Charaṇas* from their very constitution indicate a *Śamghavṛitti.* Different *Charaṇas* generally specialized in different branches of knowledge. *'Sākala' or 'Sākalaka'* is again a name synonymous to the *Saṁgha* or *Charaṇa* for the study of the Rigveda. Pāṇini also refers to the school of *Kaṭha, Charaka* and *Kalāpin.*

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[41] R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 242.

Other autonomous educational institutions:

There were other institutions in which specialization had been achieved in the domain of priestly literature and practices. *Chhandogga, Ukthikas, Yajñikas* and *Bahvrichas* were some of the important ones. These schools were the custodians of the texts and rules which the students had to study to qualify themselves for their work.

These specialized schools had their own rules and also the authority to issue ordinances under their seals. Up to about 4th c. A.D. we find the existence of certain educational *Parishads* which were perhaps the last relics of sovereign educational institutions. They were having their own particular symbols of their system of education. Some of their inscribed seals and sealings have been obtained, bearing the name of *Chhandogya* and *Bahvrichas.*

Parishads :

The autonomous, specialized institutions called *Charaṇas* were co-ordinated by a higher organization called *Parishad.* This *Parishad* was of the nature of a central executive council, co-ordinating and regulating the relations between different *Charaṇas* and giving authoritative and binding decisions on the doubtful points in the general social laws. The nature of the *Parishad* becomes clearer from its definition which goes like this, "every educational colony or settlement in ancient India had within itself an academy of learned and religious men called a *Parishad*......it was intended to be an academy of experts from whom emanated authoritative interpretations and decisions on doubtful points in the sacred texts which would be as binding on the community as the sacred texts themselves."[42]

The above definition of the *Parishada* brings an association of the General Council of the Buddhist *Saṃgha,* which emanated power of controlling local *Saṃghas* but proved ineffective because of its impermanence. Parishad on the contrary was a permanent organization and an effective institution.

Composition of the Parishada: The *Parishada* was composed of three types of members:—(i) Four such men who had completely studied the *Vedas.* (2) Three men belonging to the three orders of students of householders and of ascetics. (3) And three men knowing three different institutes of law. The composition of the *Parishada* shows that it was an academic institution of a composite or federal type on which were represented the different faculties or departments of the learning of the time. The organizational set up also included the different classes of experience and interest in society. Thus was constituted the Parishada. It could function with the same gravity and authenticity as was required of such an organization.

We thus find a very well planned federative system of education, based on the principle of autonomy to local units, corporate life and co-ordination from the centre, practising the ideal of unity in diversity.

The system retained no hereditary element, neither the element of individual supremacy. The institution, the knowledge it imparted and the spirit it infused into its members, all were given the highest importance. Thus we see that the educational system in ancient India could not remain outside the influence of the republican spirit. It was proving itself an intensive thought, which reached the deep roots of Indian social life.

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42. R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, p. 219.

The pattern of these educational institutions might have continued for some more time to invigorate the future generations, with its broad outlooks but the following ages did not find another Pāṇini to record the activities of those institutions in their own precious volumes.

CHAPTER VIII

STRENGTH AND DRAWBACKS OF THE REPUBLICS OF INDIA

In the annals of republican institutions, ancient Indian republics have distinguished themselves for certain qualities. The Indian people have left their impress upon the pages of history as the founders of original systems in spiritual as well as political life. The foundation of Indian ideas of state and government laid at a time and in a region, was surely of indigenous origin. Republics actually started functioning effectively during the time of the Buddha, i.e., 600 c. B. C. The republican trend pervaded through almost all aspects of life. The origin of the concept of a republic took place much earlier than that, in the *sabhās* and *samitis* of the *Vedic* age when the western hemisphere had not even known organized political life.

Republics were synthetical organizations :

The republics of India were artistically worked up in a way so that the individual could merge his interests in the corporate life of the community without losing his individuality. Individuals and groups of different castes were living together like the fingers of one's hand, perpetually separated yet perpetually co-operating. "A sound political, economic and social life, a power and efficiency enabling a people to survive, to grow and more securely towards a collective perfection and a vital elasticity and responsiveness that will give room for a constant advance in the outward expression of the mind and the spirit", says the savant political theorist of modern India who looked upon the country's past with the eyes of a philosopher and a guide.[1]

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[1] Sri Aurobindo, *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*, p. 2.

Longevity of the Indian republics :

Collective perfection, vital elasticity and responsiveness of the republican institutions gave them a longevity. They long outlasted the brilliant but ephemeral and troubled Greek city commonwealths. Indian republics had the capacity to develop a firm organisation and settled constitutional order. Some of them enjoyed a longer history of vigorous freedom than Republican Rome. They did not succumb to the injuries inflicted by the massive attacks of the Greek army and persisted even against the mighty empire of the Mauryan kings and were in existence even in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Firm internal organization of the republics :

Their power of enduring the foreign invasions and threats from growing empires, gives evidence of the firm internal organization of the republican states. Longevity of political institutions depends more or less upon the firmness of their organization. It is beyond doubt that the ancient Indian republics possessed of this virtue. Gautama Buddha was full of admiration for the internal organization of the *Vajjian* Confederacy and he took a number of the political practices and methods prevalent among the *Licchavis,* into his religious *Saṁgha.* He said categorically that the *Vajjians* would remain invincible so long as they adhered strictly to their ideal methods of deliberation and administration.

The Vṛṣṇis presented a parallel example. In their confederacy, local interests were given due importance but it was believed that the real strength of the league lies in the strong organization of the federal institutions. Kṛṣṇa was keen to maintain unity and solidarity of the central organizations. The best example is, of course, that of the *Licchavis* about the working of whose legislature we have definite informations. Its frequent meetings and grand arrangements made the Buddha to compare it with the assembly of the *Tāvatimsa* Gods. In *Śāntiparva,* Bhīṣma said to Yudhisthira that *gaṇas* united under the guidance of the *Kula Vṛddhas* can attain material prosperity; and outsiders also seek the alliance of confederate entities.[2] Sound internal organization can guarantee this security based on sound economy; it allures others to join the confederate body. In Kautilya's enumeration of a king's policy towards the *Saṃgha,* we hear him suggesting two different behaviours to two types of *Saṃghas.* He says, "the acquisition of the help of corporations is better than the acquisition of an army, a friend or profits. By means of conciliation and gifts, the conqueror should secure and enjoy the services of such corporations as are invincible to the enemy and are favourably disposed towards himself. But those who are opposed to him, he should put down by sowing the seeds of dissension among them and by secretly punishing them."[3] This clearly indicates that some of the republics had distinguished themselves, during the time of Kautilya, for their internal strength which made them "invincible".

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[2] *Mahābhārata,* Śānti Parva, Ch. 107. Sl. 15.

Moral assets of the republics:

The strength ensuing from a sound administrative organization creates certain moral assets which were not wanting in the republics of India. The *Śakyas* and *Licchavis* of the time of the Buddha, the *gaṇas* of the time of Bhiṣma and the *Aṁbaṣṭhas* during the time of the invasion of Alexander, were people who always acted, in matters of public interest, according to the advice of their elders. In the *Śākya* as well as the *Licchavi Saṁgha* the assembly was formed by the intellectual aristocrats, taken from the enlightened families alone Bhiṣma says, "in good *gaṇas,* Elders-by-knowledge encourage mutual subordination, behaving with complete straight-forwardness to one another. *Gaṇas* prosper because they always pay due honour to their officers who are wise, heroic, enthusiastic and preserving in the execution of their duties.[4] It is stated in the classical accounts of Ancient India that the *Aṁbaṣṭhas* sent an embassy on the advice of their Elders and decided not to fight against the Greek army though they were a people inferior to none in India, either in numbers or bravery.

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[3] Kautilya, *Arthaśāstra,* Bk. XI. Ch. I. Sec. 378. (Trans. by Shamashastry, p. 407).

[4] *Mahābhārata.* Śāntiparva, Ch. 107. Sl 16-17 & 20 (Trans. by K. P. Jayaswal : *Hindu Polity,* p. 107).

Discipline was a part of training for the youth:

The sense of obedience to the elders, respect and admiration for the superior ability and experience, postulated from the training that was imparted to the younger generations in the family as well as society. In the ideal republics education for citizenship meant, instruction given to the youth, which helped in developing a sense of discipline in them. As a result of this training, the younger generations accepted only those of proved merit and they also rose to a purpose whenever time demanded it. The verdict of *Mahābhārata* confirms this information. Bhiṣma said in the *Śāntiparva* (Ch. 107), "good *gaṇas* prosper because they discipline their sons and brothers (members along with the younger generation) and always train them and they accept only those who have been well trained."

Sense of duty:

A high sense of discipline of the citizens of ideal *gaṇas* inspired them to take up every action as a responsible member of the state, in the spirit of duty and not as a matter of right. The individual member delegated all his powers to the deliberative organ of the state retaining with himself only the right to obey. This extreme sense of duty and law-abiding nature developed in the republics because the ordinary citizen had full faith in the wisdom of their elders. The strong co-operative spirit and good-will made them feel duty bound to give their approval to all actions and decisions of their chosen ones. The ordinary man bothered little to meddle into matters which could be settled without his active participation. It was a kind of participation in the affairs of the state in a peculiar way though very different from the ways we adopt today.

Equality:

The ancient Indian republics were based on "universal equality by birth and also equality by *Kula*".[5] The young and old were equally represented in the *Śākyan Santhāgār*. The seniors did not limit the freedom of speech and expression

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[5] *Mahābhārata*, Śāntiparva, Ch. 107. Sl. 30.

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of the juniors. Every member of the assembly had the right to vote on all public matters.

In the sphere of economy, the citizens enjoyed perfect equality of the right of adopting the profession of his choice. The republics provided, above all, equality before law.[6] Buddhist movement was the pioneer of this ideal. Equality was accepted as the basic principle of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* where members were admitted without discrimination between caste, creed or locality. Even *Śudras* had been admitted in the *Saṁgha*. Many of the well known disciples of the Buddha came from lower vocations of life. Bhikku Upāli was one of them.

Gautama Buddha's strict adherence to this ideal brought changes in the society in his own time. In a conversation with a *Brāhmaṇa* called Ambattha, the Master explained what is right conduct and what is right wisdom and in another dialogue he made the vain *Brāhmaṇa* realise that the only two essential requisites in man are goodness and intelligence.[7] The superiority of the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kṣatriya,* because of high birth, was of little value in comparison to wisdom and righteousness. He concluded his conversation with these lines: "But he who is perfect in wisdom and righteousness, he is the best among Gods and men."[8] This ideal of spiritual equality, propagated by the Buddhist *Saṁgha,* was successful in bringing a change in the social outlooks. Though the society was still based on the four *varṇas,* with their rights and privileges within the specific jurisdictions, legislative assemblies comprised of members from one particular class, yet under the circumstances, the inhabitants developed a fellow feeling which really meant equality. It was not the ficticious equality which serves as a watchword for western republics; it was a feeling which always found a home in common needs and common intercourse at the spring or the well-side, at the cross roads, temples and the shrines.

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[6] B. C. Law quotes Megasthenes, "India of his time all men were held equal and all Indians passed as free citizens in the eye of the law." J. G. N. Jha R. Instt. Vol. VI. Nov. 1948. p. 1.

[7] Ambattha Suttanta: *Dialogues of the Buddha,* Tr. Rhys Davids. Pt. I.

[8] Sonadanda Suttanta: *Ibid.,* S.B.B. Vol. II.

Sense of unity :

This sense of fellowship and feeling of spiritual equality brought the people closer to each other and a common purpose, economic or political, bound them together to stand or fall against the exigencies of life. Unity was the most essential quality for the successful career of the republics, for without it they would fall easy prey to the builders of empires. Bhiṣma considered unity to be the most precious element of a *gaṇa* which required to be preserved carefully because that was the source of its strength. He said, "They fall in the clutches of the enemy, when the members, driven by anger and jealousy are divided, and thus lose mutual confidence."[9]

Unity strengthened the republics during the time of Kautilya, whom he considered as invincible. The great republic on the Beas which goes unnamed in the accounts of the Greek writers, was not greater perhaps than the organized army of the Macedonian King but the reports of their unity and determination to resist the foreign invaders unnerved the soldiers of Alexander's troops. Unity of purpose, that is, the ambition to safeguard their freedom and territory made them brave and great. This was not the artificial oneness founded on the ballot box, which in no case can pass for real unity.[10]

This unparalleled example of bravery on the part of small political organizations, almost of the size of modern districts, was not unnatural, because these communities used to live together united for a common profession. Those who lived by the profession of arms were called by *Pāṇini* as *Āyudhajīvi Saṁghas* and Kautilya called them *Vārtā-Śastropajīvi Saṁghas*. During Kautilya's time they had started taking to some trade or agriculture besides the profession of arms. Therefore it was almost compelling upon the entire community to go to the battle-field if time required it.

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[9] *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 22.

[10] V. R. Ram Chandra Dikshitar, *A Note on Ganarajya,* A.B.O.R.I. Vol. XXIII. 1942. Parts I—IV. p. 104.

History produces instances of other kinds of *Saṁghas* based on unity of religious purpose or economic purpose. The main criterion of the Buddhist *Saṁgha* was unity of religious ideals which the great Master adopted on the instance of the *Licchavis* about whose organizational excellence he never had two opinions.

Love for liberty:

The members of these small republican entities were great lovers of liberty. Small though they were, they fought with all their might, to resist the foreign invaders and when they failed, they adopted other methods of saving their freedom and honour. The example of the *Agraśreṇis* (the Agalassians) left an impression upon the Greek mind. According to Curtius, the brave fellows fought till the last possibility of evading submission to the foreign power. When they could not resist any further, they made, what is called amongst the Rajputs, "Jauhar" of their wives and children into the fire, burning all, their home and hearth.[11]

The *Yaudheyas* and the *Mālavas* moved later on, to further interior parts of the country, in order to live in independence. They raised their heads and undomitable spirit as soon as they could organize themselves again and played not an insignificant role before the rise and establishment of the Gupta Empire.

Love of liberty was not less amongst some non-political institutions. The trade-guilds or economic-corporations, certain educational institutions of corporate nature, tried to maintain their internal sovereignty by making laws for internal administration and issuing coins. They had seals of their own name. These were the *Gandhikas* amongst traders and the *Bahvrichas* amongst academic corporations.

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[11] McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, Bk. IX, p. 232.

Sense of justice :

Above all, the qualities that added to the strength of the ancient Indian republics, was their high sense of justice. Equality before law and easy approach to the law courts was considered to be the bulwark of individual liberty. Indian republics made a remarkable advancement in the field of law and administration of justice. The administration of law and justice in the *Licchavi gaṇa* has no other parallel in the history of the ancient world. The experience of the authors of the *Mahābhārata* in the field of law and justice is unique. Bhiṣma says that in criminal offences, justice should be administered through the President.[12] The arrangement for a guide book of law shows the keenness of the elders to safeguard the liberty of the individual from the arbitrary use of power by the judges. And right administration of justice was the much coveted ideal of the *gaṇas*. The same eagerness for right administration of law and justice is shown by the Buddhist *Saṁgha* which believed in the supremacy of law and not that of a person. The Buddha formulated laws to govern the life of the *Bhikkhus* as well as that of the lay community and gave them to the *Saṁgha* for the future. It seems to be an obvious fact that in every sphere of life, religious or political, the republics gave supremacy to law and its ideal administration through a well organized chain of courts.

Ultra-democratic methods of administration :

When we look to the administration of the republics we get a glimpse of people organizing their assemblies and conducting their administrative affairs on the ultra-democratic lines. Power could never get concentrated in a single authority because it was wielded by an assembly more or less numerous. The presiding officer at the assembly sessions used to be the chief executive, in the absence of the session. But these presidents of the republics were neither hereditary nor permanent. They used to hold the office for a limited period of time. They were sometimes entitled to be called *Rājās* in some of the republics. But they neither had the powers nor the privileges of hereditary kings. They were only *primus-interpares.*

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[12] *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, Ch. 107, Sl. 27.

Advanced methods of legislation :

All laws were passed by the consent of the whole house. If the attendance of the whole house was not available, a quorum was compulsory without which no public business could be taken up. The method of moving a resolution, the mode of discussion and proclamation of the bill and finally, deciding the fate of the bill by taking votes, have been given in detail in the *Vinaya-Pitaka,* the *Pāli* Buddhist text. It is said that these were the prototypes of the methods followed in the republican states around the *Buddhist Saṁgha* from where were drawn majority of its *Bhikkhus.*

Advancement in the methods of voting:

The advanced methods of secret and public voting was prevalent in the *Saṁghas.* Adult franchise was the ideal in the assemblies. Young and old were given equal opportunity to give their opinion in the affairs of the state and government. Committee system was not unknown to the assemblies. Frequency of assembly meetings made its authority more effective and useful as well.

Freedom of opinion :

Freedom of opinion in the assembly and also outside it, was practised by the citizens of the *gaṇas* as one of their essential rights. No section of opinion, however small it might be, was ever suppressed. Right of expression sometimes led to critical situations as Sri Kṛṣṇa had to face in the *Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi* league. He complained to Nārada that the bitter criticism of the supporters of different political groups had become unbearable for him and in answer to all his complaints, Nārada advised him to adopt the policy of tolerance and self restraint.[13] This reply gives a clear indication that the kinsmen of Sri Kṛṣṇa would not spare even him who happened to be the president of the confederation at that time.

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[13] *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, Ch. 81, Sl. 22. (Ch. 82. Poona Ed.).

Freedom of speech and opinion was a privilege with the members of the religious *Saṁgha* also. We have already seen in the previous chapter of the present work that at the end of every chapter of the *Mahāvagga* in which rules were formulated for the *Saṁgha,* a question is put to the council whether the members agreed with the laws or not. It implies that every member of the *Saṁgha* had the right of giving free opinion on matters of collective interest.

Organization of the government :

The *gaṇas* had the ideal form of executive. This organ consisted of the best few who could maintain unity, solidarity and homogeneity amongst the people. The *Vajjian* confederation had a council of eighteen members which drew nine from both of its constituent units. From Bhiṣma's description of the ideal *gaṇas* of his times, it appears that they were guided in crucial matters by a council of elders under the Chairman ship of their president. For he says, small groups of leading men should be empowered to decide important policies for the *gaṇa.* Such policies cannot be discussed in an assembly because the multitude can never keep things secret.[14] Secrecy of administrative policies is a key to the success of a government. The *Aṇdhaka-Vṛṣṇi* league thus had the president and the heads of other local units who formed a council and conducted the important affairs of the confederation. The small size of the executive organs resulted in promptness of decision, uniformity and efficiency.

The republics of ancient India maintained a high standard of law and administration of justice. Different schools of *Brāhmaṇas* studied the laws of the *Dharmasutras.* Some of them reach back to the period 600—300 B.C. *Āpasṭamba, Baudhāyana, Gautama* and *Vaśiṣtha* have discussed some rules which are found to be parallel systems.[15]

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[14] *Op. cit.* Ch. 107, Sl. 24, 25.

[15] Dr. Dev Raj Channaṅa, *The Vinaya Pitaka and Ancient Indian Jurisprudence,* Journal of the Bihar Research Society. Vol. XLIV, March-June, 1958, p. 23.

Common customs were honoured by law courts:

Laws thus promulgated by great scholars and their schools were found in confirmation with the common laws already established in the society. Similarly Gautama Buddha, the sole law maker for the *Saṁgha,* was very anxious to avoid all conflicts with the society and took great care not to challenge the prevalent customs.[16] Consequently our examination will surely throw some light on the laws and law courts prevalent at that time. In the confederation of the *Vajjis* they had a unified hierarchical system of judiciary and besides this hierarchy of courts, the *Kulika-Court,* a board of eight *Kula* Elders functioned for the investigation into criminal cases. It is, therefore, obvious that greater care was taken in expediting criminal cases. Moreover, this type of judicial boards were necessary for a mixed type of constitution where different types of institutions had to be organized together to meet the requirements of a mixed population.

After passing through all law courts, an appeal, in a criminal case, could be made to the head of the state through the vice-president (or *Upa-rāja*), thus promosing an individual, the opportunity to live, or to be released, in case of dissent even by a single authority. Bhīṣma has also said that in ideal *gaṇas* all justice is done through the president. The *gaṇas* thus provided to its citizens equal opportunity to approach law and justice. In other words we may say that the *gaṇas* guaranteed liberty and right of justice to its citizens to the letter as well as the spirit of the term.

Love for constitutionality:

In the *gaṇas* we find love for constitutionality. That means the *gaṇas* would never make such laws as would abrogate those already established in the land. They would always meet and deliberate as the rules prescribe. Buddha's appreciation for the constitutionality of the *Licchavis* and the *Videhas,* renowned as the *Vajji* Confederation, is a valuable testimony.

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[16] *Ibid.,* p. 26.

Material prosperity :

The political success of the *gaṇas* largely depended upon their material prosperity. We read in the description of the *gaṇas* of the Buddha's time that besides agriculture they had developed a number of trades. Due to the introduction of newer methods of production and improved conditions of transport, roads, and communication, intercourse between traders had increased, which resulted in the growth of various trade guilds. These trade guilds had become so popular and powerful that even the political heads of states could not overlook them. They used to help the rulers in paying the army, in financing national development plans, in construction work and in various other ways.

Even in later years, i.e., in the first centuries before and after Christ, the effect of the *Pax Romana* upon trade was of course, very marked. Exports of various goods of luxury from India was so high that Pliny, "who is fond of indulging in trite homilies on Roman extravagance, is right in complaining of the drain upon Roman finance caused by the Indian trade."[17]

From the accounts of Indian ports given by Ptolemy, the eminent geographer, it seems that he had visited the parts mainly in the western region, e.g., he refers to the harbour called by the Greeks as Barbarikon which was on the middle mouth of the Indus. He reports that the cargoes were disembarked here and sent in boats to Minnagara, the capital of Sindh. This was probably Pātala.[18] The intimate touches given to the description of the difficulties of access of the ancient harbour Bary-gaza on the river Narmada shows that the narrative is of actual experience. He mentions Surastrene, (obviously Surashtra), and reports that the trade, export and import of the district was immense. Rawlinson further writes on the basis of the accounts of Ptolemy only, that, trade between

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[17] H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, Ch. VI, p. 102.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

India and Rome continued to thrive steadily during the second and third century A. D.

These reports suggest that the economic condition and material prosperity of the country in general and of the western region in particular was considerably high. We can naturally anticipate that the *gaṇas* thrived on their material prosperity and economic power.

Military Strength :

Militarily the republics were second to none. Their outstanding organizational power, tactical power and experience of battle fields made them enviable in the eyes of many foreign invaders. Alexander had expressed his admiration more than once, for the bravery, equipments and organization of Indian forces. Diplomatically they had shown their calibre in taking right decision at the right time. Kautilya, the greatest of the diplomats, had said in his *Arthaśāstra* that it is better for a weak state to offer terms for alliance than to fight with a much superior and stronger power than itself. The *Ambasthas* had shown this wisdom by declining to fight with the Macedonian forces, on the advice of their elders.

If we consider the saying that, "the political realism of a *gaṇa* government is deeply marked in the *cara* (espionage), *mañtra* (counsel), *bala* (armed forces), *Sāmadānavibhedana* (means of diplomacy) and skilled foreign policy",[19] we have to admit that except in skilled foreign policy Indian republics attained distinction in all the other features.

Weaknesses of the gaṇas:

The weaknesses of the *gaṇa* do not lay either in the organization or the military power. The real danger is more internal than external because enemy can be suppressed, vanquished and kept out by a well balanced policy, but the actual danger is the internal politics created by the disgruntled and disloyal sections of the organization. "They alone form the clog in the wheel of a gaṇa's progress."[20] A *gaṇa* divided against itself cannot be saved by military power or wealth, just as Athens in ancient Greece, divided against itself could not be saved by a wall.[21] Bhiṣma warns time and again that, internal dissension is the real danger to a republic. Kautilya, the most practical of Indian statesmen, knew how to exploit the conditions of internal disturbance of the *Gaṇas.*

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[19] V. R. Ramchandra Dikshitar, *A Note on Ganarajya*, A.B.O.R.I. 1942. Vol. XXIII. p. 106.

Internal Dissensions led to breaking of gaṇas :

Dissensions led to breaking of *gaṇas.* By this we should understand that sometimes internal jealousies, personal rivalries and acute partisan feeling led to division, and new states were born. Thus small republics used to be broken into still smaller units. We find that after the fall of Mauryan empire and before the rise of the Gupta emperors, there were innumerable republican clans in western region out of which the *Yaudheyas, Mālavas* and few others were of mentionable size and significance. The smallness was the very cause of weakness of these *gaṇas.* However brave, patriotic or independence loving they might have been or whatever their virtues might have been, they broke like wood before the power of a magnanimous army or in an encounter with a strong foe. Thus the large states that developed in the neighbourhood of these republics, easily devoured the small sovereigns. Even important *Saṁghas* like that of the *Śākyas* were obliterated from the face of the earth shortly after the Buddha closed his eyes.

Extreme form of decentralization of power :

Decentralization of power, of an extreme form, often led to the formation of local groups and local leadership ending in total disintegration and disuniformity. The beginning of the end of republican states can be seen in the formation of these local groups with local interests.

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[20] *Ibid.,* p. 106.

[21] Alfred Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth,* p. 85.

Lack of sound foreign policy:

The *gaṇa* states developed their internal organization and reached a standard of perfection in it but they never cared to develop a sound policy for conducting relations with other states. Foreign policy was totally unknown to them. Naturally before encountering the larger states they could hardly imagine, how mass massacres and monetary losses could be saved by diplomatic relations. These few weaknesses, inherent in the Indian republics, together with some other factors, paved the way for their disappearance.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE REPUBLICS

During the period of the rise and prosperity of the *Śākyas, Koliyas, Licchavis* and the other republics, powerful monarchies had also been thriving in the neighbourhood. *Magadhan* power had already proved to be a danger for the *Licchavis* even during the life time of the Buddha. The *Śākyas* had also to be on their constant guard lest they were overrun by the neighbouring monarchs.

Events leading to changes in Indian Political conditions:

In the 6th c. B. C. great events took place on the border of Indian territory. The Persian empire was founded, stretching the borders of India to the home of the Graeco-Mediterranean culture. After 516 B. C. King Darins's officer, Scylax led a naval expedition through the Kabul and Indus rivers. As a result of this and subsequent invasions, the region of Sindh and western Punjab was politically disturbed. With the advancing tide of conquest and imperial domination some of the states of the eastern region, mentioned in the list of Prof. Rhys Davids had already lost their political existence. Within a century the imperialistic movement assumed greater strength and the political setting of the country was entirely changed.

Shortly after the Buddha's passing away his own kinsmen, the *Śākyas* were exterminated as a political entity. And the *Licchavis,* the sturdy race of the republicans, whose history was closely bound up with two great religious movements, Buddhism and Jainism, were brought down to political insignificance by the rising power of Magadha. Gradually the numerous small republics and kingdoms thriving around the greater powers disappeared to make room for the extending and enlarging Magadhan monarchy which "like an all absorbing Leviathan" swallowed up its weaker neighbours and emerged as the indomitable power of the day.

When we look into the speed of the changes, we ask quite naturally, why the self-governing republics fell so easily against the monarchical power? What led to the fall of the communities living by the profession of arms? We become more inquisitive about the reasons of the total extermination of the politically advanced and militarily organized states, practising all republican ideals.

The main causes of the decline of republican polity:

The causes of the decline of the republics can be summarised in three main points. The fast decline and disappearance of the culture of the ancient Indian republics was "signalised by three movements of retrogression." First of all we can attribute it "to the sinking of that superabundant vital energy and a fading of the joy of life and the joy of creation."

Secondly, it can be attributed to, a rapid cessation of the old free intellectual activity, a slumber of the scientific and the critical mind as well as the creative intelligentsia. And the third reason was the "operation of spirituality in a dispersed action which replaces the old magnificent synthesis and in which certain spiritual truths are emphasized to the neglect of others."[1] The verdict of history is to justify the reasons mentioned here.

According to Dr. N. C. Bandopadhyaya, all the three movements of retrogression can be said to be the result of the teachings of the Buddha. What was Indian Buddhism after all? "It was then and there mainly a good way of life for the people at large—a way according to Dharma, and a specific withdrawn way of life for the religieux." This is all that Prof. Rhys Davids meant by the title given to his book, *Buddhist India*. The Buddha had given a special mandate for monks, with the original mandate which was for every man in which *Artha,*

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[1] U. N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, Ch. I, p. 1.

Paramārtha was the *summum bonum,* and *Dharma* was not an externalised set of formulae, but the divine urge.[2]

Gautama Buddha's teachings affected the mentality of the people of his time. It changed their ideals of life. The Buddhist doctrine diverted popular attention from the arena of politics to that of religion. Later Buddhist monks and the other religious communities imitating their example killed all political instincts. Too much emphasis upon asceticism and world negation led to loss of zest and gusts for the good of this world. It proved to be an impracticable ideal for the general mass. They feared and despised the world and it brought inanition in life, and death in politics.

The effect of universal religion on society:

The Buddha's teachings affected the society in such a way that the changes brought thereby proved fatal for the republics. His universal religion destroyed the caste distinction and enfranchised the lower orders of the society. Sudden emancipation from excessive rigorism bore bitter fruit. The newly enfranchised masses, lacking in political instincts and education, claimed power everywhere. Like the *Helots* of Greek city states and the *Plebeians* of Rome, the masses of Indian society felt it absurd to serve faithfully the *Brāhman Purohitas,* who were neither their representatives nor their protectors. The suppressed feelings of the lower-orders got an outlet in the religion of the Buddha and expressed their dissatisfaction vehemently. They displaced the *Purohitas* from power and proved their own strength.

In ancient India as well as in all primitive societies, the priest and the military nobility had been the sole checks to the irresponsibility of the monarchs. By undermining the priestly position in ancient India, the universal religion of Buddha destroyed the enemies of absolutism and thus, in a way, furthered the growth of imperialism. Similar has been the case in Europe. The teachings of Luther fostered the cause of the absolutism of princes and paved the way for their divine right. Thus we see that pure monarchy has often been the off-spring of democratic teachings in religion.

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[2] Views expressed by C.A.F. Rhys Davids while writing the review of Dikshitar's book 'Mauryan Polity': Journal of the Royal As. Soc. 1933, p. 960

The liberated masses could not check the growing power of the kings :

The masses thus liberated from humiliation, gained status in the society and in the religious order of the Buddha. But they had not become powerful enough to check the growing power of the kings in the neighbourhood. The main cause of the weakness of the masses was again the effect of the universal religion. It broke the cohesion of tribes and communities and therefore they failed to accumulate the strength that ensues from a closely bound people, conscious of their special interests and dangers. Thus we see that in the history of the ancient Indian people, religion as a unifying force has negligible credentials in its favour.

In spite of the disintegrating effect of religion the republican societies comprising of free people, were deeply influenced by the religious ideals. The ancient Indian idealism against acquisition of power or preying over a state or a people without any offence, desisted the republics from extending their territories.[3] They loved to live in peace within their own territories and protect themselves when necessary. This gave opportunity to Magadha to wipe out the *Śākyas* and weaken the *Licchavis,* the two great republics of the eastern region.

Revival of old religious ideals and rise of Arthaśāstra school :

Under the panicky condition in the smaller and weaker political units and almost anarchic situation in the society, the ideals of the past were reinvoked, and conservatism became the creed of the day. The *Arthaśāstra* school arose and gained favour of the regal authority. Due to Kautilya's vigorous

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3. B. C. Law says: "The Indians neither invaded other men, nor other men invaded the Indians." (on the basis of the report of Megasthenes)—J. of G.N. Jha R. Instt. Allahabad. Vol. XVI. May—August. 1959. p. 267.

efforts it became the only accepted political view. Idealism in politics passed away and the concept of a state on the basis of a strong military power came into existence. An age of moral irresponsibility dawned. The aim of material gains with the help of a strong military power and political authority at the centre, replaced the ideals of a pluralistic political discipline. Powerful monarchs enthroned themselves allowing the republics to vanish away.

The method of the Arthaśāstra school rang the death-knell of the republics:

Kautilya, the last exponent of the *Arthaśāstra* school said that the hapiness of man in society was possible through the governmental functions only under a king. According to him regal authority is the primary basis of social existence. A state of war and violence over-powers a society, if there is no coercive authority to conduct the affairs of the people. The end of such a state of war and violence is possible only under the regal authority. This belief in the coercive authority makes him regard absolute monarchy necessary. Kautilya, therefore, suggests various methods of destroying the republican trends of life. He considers it necessary for the growth of faith in imperialism and success of the empire builder. Mauryan Empire struck the republics fatally and caused their disappearance from the stage of politics.

Effect of Greek invasion :

Chandragupta Maurya had struck the republican states at a time when they had hardly recovered from the heavy loss in men and material, sustained from the Greek invasion. The soil of the Punjab, studded with the numerous republics, half republics and kingdoms, was trampled under the boots of Alexander's soldiers and these very states had to bear the main brunt of his arms. The Greek historians have said that the small republics and principalities showed the highest order of bravery, patriotism and knowledge of strategy. In spite of their firm resistance, they were subjugated, one after the other, by Alexander the Great.

Disunity of the republics led to their easy decline :

The north-western region presented the sorry spectacle of a disunited house. This part of India was parcelled into a number of states. Historians have recorded, "engaged in petty internecine feuds and jealousies due to which some of them found their chance in seeking alliance with an alien aggressor."[4] This paved the path of an easy fall of the militarily powerful republics. It reminds us the warning of Bhīṣma, given in Śāntiparva to the *gaṇas*, "united they win, divided they fall". Internal disunity resulted into a number of small republics, which could not resist the massive power of the Macedonian army, individually. Their size and their population would not simply allow it. There was no towering personality of the type of Chandragupta Maurya who successfully repelled the invasion of Selukos Nikator two decades afterwards. Nor was there any statesman like Sri Kṛṣṇa to bring the disgruntled leaders under his able leadership by a policy of self-restraint and tolerance.

The impact of the Greek invasion was too heavy. Kautilya's imperialistic policy could therefore attain easily, what it desired. The beginning of the end of the history of Indian republics had actually taken place during the Mauryan Empire. Some of them survived as free communities and moved to the interior parts of the country, in order to protect themselves, from further invasions.

By the rise of the Gupta empire, the entire face of the society changed. Under Samudragupta all separatism merged into an organized, officialized orthodox society and a political system which recognized and fostered monarchy and imperialism. Thus the integration of the smaller units under the Gupta Empire brought the real end.

Change in the psychology of the nation :

With the rise of a powerful monarchy, the psychology of the nation was entirely changed and the outlook became lofty and magnanimous. It was a psychology directly borrowed from the emperor. The Hindus of his day thought of big undertakings. The small republican states and their ideals did not make much impression under this loftiness of ideas.

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[4] Rama Shanker Tripathi, *Alexander's Invasion of India* : A revised study. Indian Historical Quarterly Vol. XVI. June, 1940, pp. 541-42

The *Mālavas* had already begun to pass into hereditary families; the inscriptional evidence shows that the *Yaudheyas* had assumed titles like *Mahārāja* and *Mahāsenāpati*. On the whole, "contemporary history witnessed a tendency of the republican states of this period to place themselves under the protection of individual leaders obviously for better defence against external aggression."[5] The republics of Rajputana dissolved into Rajputs who forgot all the traditions of their republican ancestors. And the republics of the Punjab dissolved into the Jats with their past lost. The life giving element was gone. In the tune of an epitaph, Dr. Jayaswal writes, "the seed-pod for the rise of a Krishna, the prophet of rightful war and the prophet of the cult of duty; the seed-pod to produce a Buddha, the prophet of a universal religion and universal equality, was consumed for ever . . . ."[6]

It is said that the *gaṇas* possessed of *Sanghata Vṛtti* and *Sanghata Yoga*. It was the feeling of oneness, of unity of purpose and of action. It was a co-operative endeavour of the most efficient variety. No differences entered the confederating units which were actuated by common ideals and by common will. It was realised that the entire success of the *gaṇa* government was based on the good will of its members.[7] This 'common will' of the confederating units, and their 'co-operative endeavour' gave them a long lease of life which can be counted by centuries.

The republics of ancient India disappeared from the political stage by the middle of the 4th c. A. D. for ever but they left the spirit behind. The spirit of co-operation and good will was adopted by the monarchical polity as a key to successful administration.

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[5] U.N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, p. 240.

[6] K. P. Jayaswal, *History of India*, pp. 210-211.

[7] V. R. Ramchandra Dikshitar, *Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XXIII. 1942, p. 105.

CHAPTER X

LEGACY OF THE REPUBLICS OF ANCIENT INDIA

In our study of the political institutions of the period between 700 c. B. C. to 350 A.D. we have noticed the simultaneous growth of the monarchical and republican polity. Though the Brahmanical thinkers were not in favour of republican form of government and constitutional monarchy was regarded as the best and stablest foundation of state, they could not restrain themselves from sanctioning the republican trends to pass as auxiliary precautions against prospective autocrats.

Hindu polity, as stated earlier, has its distinguishing features, which can be traced in monarchical as well as republican forms of states. The fundamentals underlying both the forms of governmental organizations were democratic institutions, which served as effective checks on the president of the republic or the monarch of the kingdom whenever they strayed away from the path of virtue or *Dharma.* For, the state was made up of two authorities, the political authority and legal authority. The legal authority was the sovereignty of the law, i.e. *Dharma.*

Sovereignty of Dharma or law :

There was an implicit obedience to the paramountcy of law of the state, whether he be the president of the republic or the monarch of an empire, he could neither abrogate nor overrule the law of the land. This was a deft device of common control, worked out by the ancient Indian statesmen. "By this wonderful mechanism the political authority was made to rest on principles of right and justice. The head of the state could not easily indulge in the luxury of despotism or tyranny," says Prof. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar.[8] In short the willing co-operation of the people and the head of the state was the main factor reckoned with in the ancient Indian polity.

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[8] A.B.O.R.I. : Vol. XXIII, p. 103.

The king was a servant, though a master in form, of the people :

In the republics of the *Śākya, Licchavis, Mallas and Vṛṣṇis* the co-operation of the people is quite perceptible. We find the legacy of these republics in the monarchies which out-lasted them. Commenting upon passages of the *Mahābhārata,* Dr. N. C. Bandopadhyaya wrote, "prevailing political ideas, which in spite of the influence of sacerdotalism or of paternalism, recognized the ultimate sovereignty of the people and regarded the king as the custodian of popular interests who received tribute and allegiance in lieu of righteous rule." He says more, "the king was merely a custodian of his people's money and the epic thinkers are almost unanimous in holding this opinion."[9] Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Varma says in the same context, "the *Mahābhārata* definitely called the taxes to be the wages of the king, 'the one sixth *Bali* (tax), other duties, fines and forfeitures, collected according to laws of the *Śāstras,* shall constitute your revenue'. God has made the king, though master in form, the servant of the people, getting his wages in taxes for the purpose of continuous protection and growth. Even when kingship had become a hereditary and fully entrenched and powerful institution, lip service was always paid to the theory of elective kingship by elaborate coronation rituals."[10] These opinions expressed after a thorough study of ancient Indian polity, very clearly show that the people's choice in the affairs of the state and the Government had never been rudely neglected even during the rise of empires.

The king–a co-ordinating authority :

In the righteous monarch of the *Mahābhārata* we find the popularly elected president, who exercised his authority for co-ordinating the diverse forces working in the state, in order to strengthen its synthetical nature. Sri S. K. Belvalkar finds in the thousand year old Javanese version of the Epic, in which the quintessence—the 'navanita' of statecraft is given in the half stanza, which says, "the head of the state is herein advised to be the gardener of the state, whose duty it must be to string together diverse flowers into a charming garland, thereby rising superior to all differences, skilfully blending all colours, sizes and aptitudes, so that they might observe the common purpose. As opposed to the gardener's, is the work of the *'angārika'*, the incendiary, who takes delight in discovering and accentuating differences . . . . as to set the whole state into a conflagration and under cover of the fumes created in the process, to make away with whatever valuable he can lay hold upon."[11]

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[9] N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Hindu Polity and Political Theories,* Pt. I. p. 194.

[10] J.B.R.S. Vol. XXXVIII, March 1952, p. 490.

Influence of popular opinion upon the monarch :

These are some examples of the conditions provided in the 'Epic' and *Dharma-śastras*, which explain the constitutional position of a monarch. More positive examples are found in the *Jātakas* and also in the Epics, which clearly enumerate the extent of the influence of popular opinion upon the ruling monarchs. Fick, while examining the position of the king in the Buddhist age, writes, "beyond the power of inflicting punishment, the king's authority does not seem according to the *Jātakas,* to have extended, to the person of the subjects. We read nowhere in our texts of any right which the king had to force his subjects to military or other service, on the contrary, the limitations of the king's power are distinctly pointed out, when the king in reply to the request of the *Yakkhini,* (a female supernatural being) who was made his chief consort, to give her unrestricted power over the whole kingdom, says, 'my love, in no way do all the subjects of my kingdom belong to me, nor am I their lord; only over those who rise against the king and do wrong am I lord. Therefore I cannot give you unrestricted power over the whole kingdom."[12] This conversation between a king and his queen-consort explains the position of the monarch.

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[11] A.B.O.R.J.: Vol. XXIX. 1949, Pts. I—IV, p. 300.

The influence of the priests and of the ministers, in the matters of succession was rare except in the case of absence of an heir, or in the case of the deposition of a tyrant or a handicapped monarch. Otherwise it was not attached any special significance during this period. The importance of *Dharma* as an all embracing institution was impressed upon the king by our writers so frequently that it must have had its psychological effect on every monarch. According to the views of ancient writers, the king was not to act as he pleased, but was to regard his high office as a sacred trust and was to rule according to the dictates of the *Śāstras.*

In the *Mahābhārata,* kings of the Kuru line from the father of Śāntanu to Janmejaya, ascended to the throne with the approval of the people; Dr. Bandopadhya commenting over this custom says that "the kings feared to commit arbitrary acts lest the people brought him to book."[13]

The republican trend can be more perceptibly seen in the constitution of Pātala in the 4th c. B. C. during Alexander's invasion of India. Pātala, though not a pure republic, may be classed among one of its variations. It had a constitution, which Kautilya places under the technical name *Dvai-rājya.* In this state there were two hereditary kings from two ruling houses. But their authority was very much restricted under the paramount authority of a council of elders who were actually the rulers over the state. The legacy of the collegial sovereignty is present here, in the exercise of joint authority of the two hereditary kings and the council of elders representing popular will. In this constitution we see a blending of monarchic and aristocratic elements, based on the republican principle.

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[12] Richard Fick, *Social Organization in North East India,* Ch. V, p. 113.

[13] N. C. Bandopadhyaya, *Indian History Quarterly,* Vol. I, March 1925. pp. 98-99.

Even in the hey-day of monarchy, when India recognized the necessity of having a strong ruler, none of the political thinkers were prepared to vest in him the absolute authority to rule arbitrarily. If the ancient thinkers have emphasised the powers and prerogatives of the king they have also laid great stress on his duties and responsibilities.

After a long period of successful career the republics were brought under subjugation by the Mauryan empire for the first time. Chandragupta Maurya made the first attempt to unify the entire land under the sway of one national monarch. Even in the empire under Chandragupta Maurya we find the principle of decentralization as the basis of administration. Ancient India "believed in the self-government in the group, in the extension of the self-government from the sovereign at the top through all grades and strata of society down to the lowest classes in the villages. Every village was self-governing. There were also unions of villages as self-governing federations. Ancient India was thus built up as a vast rural democracy . . . . India owes the preservation of her culture to her self-governing villages or rural republics in which it was centered through the long course of her history which has seen so many political revolutions and changes of sovereignty."[14] This powerful remark of an eminent scholar is almost a tribute paid to the Indian System of republics. The spirit of democracy was found at the root of the lower institutions and not in the highest organs of the state alone.

Independent Village Panchas:

The aloofness of the Indian village from high politics at the centre attracted the attention of Megasthenes. Village affairs were discussed and decided among the village *Panchas,* which continued to exist since the days of King Bimbisar. Two incidents may be quoted here, one from the *Mahavagga* and the other from the *Mahābhārata,* from which we can easily deduce that even under powerful monarchies the smallest social and political unit of the state fabric had full independence and political status. The village communities were ruled by headmen or *Grāmāṇis,* chosen by the villagers, together with a number of village people who acted as assistants. They administered small civil and criminal suits and did all benevolent work for the local unit as security measures against robbers, raised local army. Mahavagga narrates the story of Seniyo Bimbisāra consulting eighty thousand *grāma* leaders and in the *Mahābhārata* (*Sabhāparva,* Ch. V) *Nārada* asked Yudhiṣthira, whether the *Pancha* was busy. The *Pancha* comprised of *Samaharta, Samvidhata,* the *Prasasta, Lekhaka* and *Sākśi.*

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[14] R. K. Mookerjee: *Chandragupta Maurya and his Times,* Ch. II, p. 47.

These local committees resemble the village Santhāgārs of the *Śākyan* republic, in the miniature form. Each village having a common body to discuss their common affairs, free of any central control, definitely bears the legacy of the republics which created the tradition of decentralized rule. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee has traced out the village communities of South India to show how the "ancient Munda-Dravidian culture first mingled together to produce the compact and efficient village systems : this was assimilated and comprehended by the political institutions of the Aryan village community which formed the foundation of Indo-Aryan Polity. Thus was evolved the conglomerate structure of the Indian village communities, knit together no longer by tribal customs or motives of self-interest, but by common ethical and social ideals worked out in a deeply humanised and socialized life by the abiding instincts of communalism with which these races have been so richly endowed."[15] According to him three classes of village assemblies are said to have existed in the South. The general body of the village was called *Urar,* those of the merchants were called *Nagarttar* and the district assemblies as *Nattan.* The assemblies met perhaps in the *Sabhā-mandapams* of the temple or under the *pipal* or olive tree just as the *Sarpanch* holds a meeting of the village *panchayat* today under a *pipal* or a *neem* tree. The kings could not but respect their rights and privileges. Local laws and customs were recognized which stabilized their independent status all the more. The *Nigamas* or the town committees were equally autonomous, enjoying even the right of minting coins."[16]

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[15] Radha Kamal Mukerjee, *Democracies of the East,* pp. 198-200.

Even if we look to our own age and try to see what legacy we have borne of our ancient republics, we shall not meet with utter disappointment. We may find the cause of the origin, organization, status and influence of the trade-guilds of our times, in the trade corporations of our ancestors.

The legacy of the ancient trade guilds : ,

In ancient India, the trade guilds originated to look after the interest of those who were engaged in a common trade. Gradually they made efforts for the betterment of trade conditions. With the improvement of transport, roads and communication, the intercourse between the traders of different parts of the country increased. This led to the strengthening of the organization. And finally the traders with a strong internal organization of their associations or guilds tried to seek the favour of the political head of the state. It was not an arduous task. They could achieve their goal easily because the economic power had concentrated, by that time, in their hands. The king or the head of the state had to seek very often the financial help or advice of the heads of these trade guilds in lieu of which he was bound to give them internal autonomy and a status in the society.

The origin, growth and influence of the various types of trade unions of the present century are not dissimilar from those of the ancient times. The trade union movement originally developed to look after the welfare of the workers engaged in various trades. Under the influence of socialism the movement strengthened gradually and ultimately aimed to control the government; although the methods were not the same. The trade-guilds of our age, control the government not through mutual co-operation. It is done either through ballot box or by agitational movements. Leaving aside the method, the present day trade organizations resemble those of the past in other respects. Their similarity in the purpose, organizational strength and ultimate aim of controlling the government, make them look almost like each other.

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[16] Sir Alexander Cunningham's collection of civic coins struck by the people of the cities of Dojaka, Talimata, etc., quoted by D. R. Bhandarkar in *"Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity"* p. 119.

Legacy of the ancient assembly:

Our parliamentary heritage can also be traced in the assemblies of the Buddhists which were the prototypes of their political counterparts. The parliamentary system of independent India owes its allegiance to the British parliament while "it may come as a surprise to many", in the words of the Marquess of Zetland, "to learn that in the assemblies of the Buddhists in India, 2000 years and more ago, to be found the rudiments of our parliamentary practice of the present day. The dignity of the assembly was preserved by the appointment of a special officer—the embryo of 'Mr. Speaker' in our house of commons. A second officer was appointed whose duty it was to see that, when necessary, a quorum was secured—the prototype of the parliamentary 'chief whip' in our own system. A member initiating business did so in the form of a 'motion' which was then open for discussion. In some cases this was done once only, in others, three times, thus anticipating the practice of parliament in requiring that a bill be read a third time before it becomes law."[17]

From the Marquess' statement it is crystal clear that the modern parliamentary procedure had been devised long ago by the members of the assemblies of small republics which gave the Buddha and Mahavira, the two great admirers and votaries of republicanism, to the world. We cannot claim the system of voting by ballot to be a modern instrument for our ancestors practised it ages ago. The parliamentary officers like the Chief-Whip and his assistants have their hegemony in the officers of the ancient assemblies. The details of the parliamentary procedure, practised in the Buddhist assemblies, have been discussed in chapter seven of the present work. Those informations show how remarkable is the resemblance between the assemblies of more than 25,00 years ago and those of the present day.

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[17] Quoted by Sripad Ram Sharma, *Our Heritage and its Significance*, pp. 93-94.

The number of members of the ancient assemblies were large enough. The *Śākyan* assembly had a strength of five hundred members[18] and the traditional number of the assembly of the *Licchavis* is given as 7707, in the *Jātakas*. It is natural to anticipate that this large number of members must have been taken on some proportional basis in order to represent the entire class of rulers. It is not known, however, whether they were selected from each family of the *Śākya* clan or they were chosen by the entire population out of the candidates nominated by each *Kṣatriya* family. Whatever might have been the method, there is no denying the fact that the assembly thus formed enjoyed the consent and confidence of the entire community. In modern republics also the assemblies' main source of strength is popular consent expressed through ballot box.

Though we do not hear of adult franchise or a general election in the ancient republics yet the right of equality of the members of the assembly, young or old, is mentioned time and again. We find the principle of equality being practised among the parliamentarians of our age whether they be the members of the treasury bench or of the opposition.

Judicial traditions :

The separation of judiciary from the other organs of the government is taken today as the soundest method of protecting the individual from the evils of the arbitrary use of power by the executive or the legislature. Even in this respect we cannot claim of our originality. The ideal system of a separate judiciary of the *Vajjian* confederacy set the example for the posterity. We find the present hierarchical system of judiciary, guided by a book of precedents laying the fundamental laws of the land, rooted in the system of the ancient *Vajjian* confederation. We can easily picture a modern system of courts in the setting of an ancient society. The *Vajjian's* right of final appeal to the head of the state is very much the same as that of a modern citizen to appeal to the power of pardon and reprieve of the president.

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[18] *Lalitavistara*, Ch. 12. *Shilpasandarsanaparivartalo*, p. 99. Edited by P. L. Vaidya.

Neither is the principle of equality before law, an achievement of our age. This ideal had also been realized by the citizens of ancient Indian states. Equality before law was not only a prevalent fact in the republics or the Buddhist *Saṁgha,* it had also been in practice in the domain of kings. The early Buddhist canons had reversed the discriminatory clauses of the penal law in the *smṛtis.* It is reflected in a remarkable story of the *Pāli* canon relating incidentally to the practice prevailing in one of the contemporary states. In *Majjhima Nikāya* (II, 88), "a king of Madhura, addressing the sage Mahakaccayana, observes that if a *Khattiya,* a *Brahmāṇa,* a *Vessa,* or a *Sudda* is a burglar, thief, house-broker, foot pad, or adulterer, and if the king's men were to arrest him and bring him up for sentence, the king would put him to death or confiscate his property or banish him or otherwise deal with him as is required by the circumstances." In this we find a remarkable example that the offender's former designation as Khattiya etc., was given no special privilege by the Buddhist canon and that the offender was merged in the male factor. In other words, the distinctive immunities of the caste with their very names were nullified by the commission of the criminal act so as to ensure the equality of all in the eye of the law.

Unity in the essentials:

Thus we see that the republics of today do not differ from those of the ancient times in the essentials, the differences are perceptible in the non-essentials. The cardinal features of successful *gaṇas,* enumerated by *Bhiṣma* in the *Mahābhārata,* viz., unity, solidarity, confidence in efficient leadership, respectful attitude towards the wise and the virtuous, recognition to the authority of law, firm internal organization, dependence on honest and able officers, economic prosperity and absence of mutual distrust and jealousy can be accepted as the ideals of our own democratic republic even today. We should be alert about those situations which led to the decadence and fall of the ancient republics and keep up our political strength by strict adherence to the essential principles.

Many western authors were of opinion, till lately, that from the beginning of Indian history, religious institutions controlled the character and the development of its people to an extent unknown elsewhere. And writers like Prof. Dunning have said that the oriental Aryans never freed their politics from the theological and metaphysical environment and therefore, he was compelled to limit himself "practically to the philosophy of the European Aryan peoples."[19]

From our present study we can prove that state and religion were not governed by the same laws nor by the same authority. The king, with the exception of Emperor Aśoka, never preached any religion. Political science was given an independent status and the political activities of the individuals, their due importance. *Rājdharma* was considered to be the root of, or quintessence of all *dharmas*. *Mahābhārata* even places it at the head of all dharmas.[20]

If we look deeper into the spiritual life of India, we shall realize that spirituality absorbed the people completely in the inward life of the soul which on its own part energised the entire community and this found its expression in the highest type of organizational capacity in the external sphere also and political life was not left out of its pale. Taken as a whole, history supplies no second instance of a synthetical development of life, as we had in India. This has been the unique achievement of the nation and has created its special place in the annals of the social and political life of man. The trends thus created by the past generations have to be perpetuated by the present one and the ideals have to be kept high.

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[19] W. A. Dunning, *A History of Political Theories; Ancient and Medieval*, Introduction Chapter.

[20] See P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśastra*, Vol. III, p. 3.

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INDEX

A

Abhisheka, 28
Ābhiras, 51, 129
Ācāryas, 70
Acharaṅga Sūtra, 26
Accounts of the Greek writers, 179
Agreya, 131, 156
Agra-Sreṇis, 43, 120, 123
Agalassians, 43, 120
Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, 62
Ajātaśatru, 11, 86, 88, 94
Akouphis, 122
Alexander, 22, 115, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123
Āmrapāli, 89, 95.
Amātya, 95
Ambasṭhas, 44, 119, 129
Ambaṭṭha, 81
Anguttara-Nikāya, 11, 26, 113
Anabasis, 117
Aṇdhaka, 59, 62, 63, 102
Aṇdhaka-Vṛṣṇi, 25, 129, 138, 139, 141, 142
Ānanda, 11, 78, 81, 149
Anuseṭṭhis, 168
Āpastamba, 183
Apella, 7
Arhata, *Arhat-ship*, 86, 152
Arjuna, 128
Arjunāyanas, 49, 50, 51, 55, 107, 142, 143, 144
Arrian, 20, 41, 46, 117
Arājaka constitution, 27
Arthaśāstra, 53, 64, 113, 114, 123, 124, 131, 164
Arthaśāstra school, 192
Arbhata, 102, 105
Aroggya-vihāra, 162
Āsanaprajñāpak, 80
The Assembly, 134
Aśokan inscriptions, 47
Aṣṭa-kula (skt), *Aṭṭhakulaka* (pāli), 92, 94
Asuras, 101
Aṣṭādhyāyi, 19, 100, 109, 131
Aṭṭhakatha, 92
Asani, 112
Audumbaras, 144, 145
Autonomous educational institutions, 171
Avadāna Śataka, 16, 33
Āvās, 156
Āyudhajīvi, 19, 59, 60, 61, 101, 105, 115

B

Bahudhānyaka, 106
Babhru, 139
Bahvrichas, 171
Bases of forming *gaṇas* in ancient India, 18
Baudhāyana, 183
Beluva, 149
Bhaddasāla-Jātaka, 34, 79
Bhandāgārika, 89, 91
Bharata-*gaṇa*, 103
Bhiṣma, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 140, 175
Bhikkhu, 149, 155, 156, 160
Bhikkhu Saṁgha, 69, 155, 162
Bhiṣmaparva, 128
Bhīta, 166
Bhadra, 131
Bhaujya constitution, 24
The Bhaggas, 35
Bhoja, 128, 139
Bhojakas, 25
Bodhapakkhiya Dhamma, 153
Brachmanoi, 46
Brāhmaṇa-kritāha, 19
Brāhmaṇa republic, 51, 105, 120, 123

Brāhamaṇa-gupta, 103
The Buddha, 53, 71, 77, 104, 115, 132, 148, 149, 152, 175, 177.
Buddhaghosa, 76
Buddhist Literature, 136
Buddhist *saṁgha,* 22, 148, 152, 181
The Bulis, 35

C

Chaturdika Bhikku saṁgha (Skt.)
Catuddisa Bhikku saṁgha (pali), 154
Cetokhila Sutta, 154
Chandragupta Maurya, 116, 200
Chhandogga, 171
Charaṇas, 170, 171
Chandra, 101
Chanda, 82
Cicero, 2, 8
Classification of Republics, 14
Colas, 125
Committee system, 159
Concept of Republic in India, 8
Concept of *gaṇa* state in the *Mahābhārata,* 12
Confederations, 59
Confederation of the Vajjis, 11
The Council, 155
Council of Elders, 121, 134
Cullavagga-Jātaka, 21, 76, 83
Curtius Rufus, 102, 118

D

Dāmani, 61
Dāmanyadi, 101
Dāṇḍaki, 103
Darbha-Mallaputtra, 158
Dārteya, 102, 105
Dasarāh, 102
Dasamandala, 128
Dasaraṇās, 129
Democratic Republic, 53
Devadattaka, 112
Dhamma, 152, 153, 154
Dhammika-Sutta, 153
Dharma-Sutras, 164
Dharma-śāstras, 198
Dhammakāya, 151
Dhvaja, 145
Digvijaya, 130
Divine Master, 151
Double kingship of Sparta, 7
Dvairājya Constitution, 27

E

Ekrājā, 10, 31, 54
Ekpanna-Jātaka, 34, 89
The Elders, 79
The Epics, 198
Epic Age, 104
Equality, 135, 177

F

Freedom of opinion, 182

G

Gaṇas, 10, 20, 50, 51, 58, 71, 101, 110, 125, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 138, 140, 146, 147, 149, 150
Gaṇapuraka, 80, 82, 157
Gaṇapatha, 100
Ganānutsavasaṇketa, 128
Gaṇa-Mukhyas, 13, 136
Gaṇa-Court, 138
Gautama, 183
Genos, 104
Gerousia, 7
Gotra, 170, 171
Ghositarama *Saṁgha,* 162
Greek (writers) 7, 51, 53, 55, 60, 102, 115, 122, 123
Greek invasion, 193, 194
Greek City state, 15
Grāmani, 112, 115, 201
Guptas, 142, 148
Gupta Empire, 30, 146

H

Hindu Republics, 51
Hobbes, 8
Hyphasis, 117

I

Inscriptional Evidence, 107

J

Janapada, 9, 26, 53, 100, 104, 127, 145
Janapadināh, 105
Jainism, 149
Jain texts, 16
Jātaka, 10, 33, 53, 90, 114, 165, 168, 198
Jāti, 135
Jānaki, 103
Jālmāni, 103
Jeṭṭhka, 168
Judiciary of the Licchavis, 93
Judicial traditions, 204
Jñapti, 82

K

Kautilya, 19, 20, 26, 53, 59, 60, 64, 114, 123, 125, 128, 131, 141, 142, 165, 193
Kaṭhas, 54
Karṇaparva, 62
Kapilavastu, 73, 79, 81
Karmavācha, 82
Kauravas, 115
Kathaians, 120
Kāśmiras, 128
The Kāśika, 65, 101, 112
Kātyāyana, 9, 100, 102, 118
Keralaputras, 125, 126
Khanda, 89
Kharosṭhi, 140
Khomadhussa, 75
King Bimbisara, 200
The King, a co-ordinating authority, 197
Kingship with popular council, 41
Koliyas, 35, 69, 97, 155.
Kośala, 79, 169
Koshāmbi, 161, 166
Kophen, 121
Kraushṭaki, 103
Krisṇa, 59, 62, 102, 132, 139, 140, 141
Kṣtriya, 9, 58, 73, 128, 129, 155
Kṣtriya-śreṇi, 40
Kṣtriya-republic, 120
Kṣtriya-saṁgha, 105
Kṣtriya-grihapati, 135
Kṣtriya-kṛitaha, 19
Kṣudraka, 38, 54, 61, 101, 102, 117, 119, 122, 123, 144
Kula, 24, 104, 113, 135, 137, 138, 149
Kula-courts, 138
Kula-vṛdhas, 175
Kuṇindas, 144, 145
Kuśinagara, 88
Kukura, 124, 128, 139
Kuru, 53, 103, 124, 128, 131
Kutumbin, 135
Kuṣānas, 142
Kurukshetra, 103
Kumār-Pugas, 112
Kumārkas, 113

L

Lalitavistara, 79, 91
Laski, 3
League of republics, 40
League of the Mallas & Kṣudrakas, 63
Legacy of the Assembly, 202
Legacy of the trade-guilds, 202
Licchavis, 30, 34, 54, 59, 61, 63, 85, 90, 94, 122, 124, 138, 142, 144, 148, 175, 189
Longevity of the Indian republics, 175
Lokas, 139
Lokesvaras, 139

Love of Liberty, 179
Love of constitutionality, 184

M

Madras, 51, 54, 60, 62, 63
Madraka, 124
Madhamika, 145
Madhyadesa, 60
Magadha, 86, 142, 189
Mahārājā Janapada, 63, 146
Mahānāma Śākya, 79
Mahāparinibhāna-Sutta, 86, 87, 149, 153
Mahāṭṭama, 130
Mahāvagga, 155, 158, 159, 200, 201
Mahābhārata, 25, 27, 36, 37, 38, 50, 51, 60, 61, 62, 71, 94, 104, 112, 113, 115, 125, 127, 131, 132, 137, 138, 139, 181, 199, 200
Mahāṭṭaka, 92
Mahāvira, 87, 148
Mauryan Empire, 123, 125, 131, 141, 146, 193, 200
Matta-Mayuraka, 144
Mahāsenapati, 108, 143
Mahākshtrapa Rudradamana, 107
Maltecoral, 123
Malla, (Rāṣtra), 16, 35, 44, 69, 81, 85, 88, 96, 118, 122, 123, 128, 144, 155
Mālavas, 19, 20, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 61, 62, 105, 117, 119, 129, 142, 143, 195
Mālva-*gaṇa,* 133
Mālava-*nagar,* 143
Marohae, 123
Material prosperity, 185
McCrindle, 102
Methods of voting, 182
Megasthenes, 20, 41, 116
Military strength, 186
Mlecchas, 131
Montesquieu's concept of republic, 2
Moral assets, 176
Moruni, 123
Moriyas, 35
Mountain tribes, 64
Mote-hall, 81
Monāstic-order, 149
Mousikanos, 120
Musicāni, 46

N

Naigamā (Nigama) 58, 164, 166
Nāgamunda-Śākya, 79
Nationalism, 104
Nikāya, 10, 153, 164
Niyuktas, 109, 114
Non-monarchical constitutions, 24
Numastic Evidences, 47, 106
Nyāsa, 121, 122

O

Oligarchy, 56, 121
Order, 149, 151
Orosius, 102
Other independent nations, 45

P

Pancagaṇa, 128
Pancakarpata, 129
Pandyas, 125
Pancālas, 53, 124
Parsu, 101
Parivrājaka, 149, 153, 154
Parishad, 171, 172
Party rivalry, 124
Patañjali, 101, 102
Pauras, 127
Parvata-vāsināh, 64
Pāṇini, 9, 19, 31, 32, 53, 54, 59, 60, 62, 100, 102
Pāli-canons, 90
Pāndavas, 101, 115, 130, 131
Pārsva, 61
Pātala, 44, 58, 68, 121, 199
Pātimokkha, 154, 160
Pāveni-Pustaka, 94
Pettanika, 26

Phratries, 104
Pimparama, 120
Pliny, 123
Plutarch, 46, 120
Polis, 105
Prabhās, 139
Prāchya, 103
Prasenjit, 81
Pratijñā, 82
President, 71, 80, 135
Ptolemy, 185
Puga-grāmanika, 113

R

Rāshtrikas, 26
Rājya, 32
Rājā, 14, 15, 39, 59, 62, 63, 79, 94, 124, 138
Rājgaha (pali), 88
Rājgṛha (Skt.), 153
Rājkṛtva, 109
Rājsabha, 109
Rājanyas, 50, 58, 62, 140, 145
Rājśabdopajīvins, 59, 60, 62, 64, 124
The *Rājdharma*, 131, 206
The Rāmāyana, 127
Religious *saṁghas*, 69
Republic, 1
Republics in the Buddhist Literature, 33
Republics in the Jain Literature, 33
Republics in the *Mahābhārata*, 36
Republics in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*, 39
Republics mentioned in the Greek accounts, 40
Republics under the Mauryas, 47
Republican trends in social life, 21
Republican trends in rural life, 22
Riṣis, 127
Rock-edict, 125
Rohitaka, 131
Rome, 53
Round table of King Arthur, 151
Rudradamana, 144

S

Sabhā, 100, 174
Sabhāparva, 37, 128, 129
Sabarcae, (Sabargre), 102
Sadharma, 151
Saiva, 145
Sākyas, 34, 54, 59, 63, 69, 73, 88, 122, 142, 155, 189
Śākya-parishada, 78
Śākya-saṇthāgāra, 177
Śākya-Muni, 148
Śākha, 149
Śākyaputtiya samana, 151, 163
Śāl, 153
Śalākā, 82, 84
Śalākā-gahāpaka, 82
Saṁgha, 10, 31, 32, 51, 54, 58, 64, 82, 100, 103, 111, 113, 115, 124, 132, 138, 146, 148, 149 to 164
Saṁgha-kamma, 156
Saṁgha-mukhya, 113, 124, 139
Saṁgha-vritti, 171
Samatha-khandaka, 161
Saṁbos, 120
Samiti, 100, 174
Sankreya, 102, 105
Saṇthāgāra, 22, 35, 78, 81, 83, 90
Saṇgala, 120
Sāntiparva, 28, 36, 38, 50, 125, 127, 131, 134, 139, 140, 175
Sarvaseni, 101
Śastropajivins, 59, 61
Satavata, 102
Sattha, 153, 154
Sattha-vāhajetthaka, 114
Semi republican tribes, 65
Senāpati, 89, 90, 91, 94, 138
Sense of justice, 181
Setthis, 168
Śikkha, 154
Śilpas, 79
Sibi, 50, 119, 129, 144, 145.
Siṁha, 90
Singhae, 123
Sonadanda-sutta, 76
Sovereignty of Dharma and Law 196

Sparta, 121
Śreṇis, 19, 66, 111, 113, 114, 115, 164, 165, 166
Śreṇis in South India, 169
Subhreya, 102, 105
Subhrādibhyascha, 102
Sudracae (*Sudrakas*), 44
Sudras, 51, 129, 177
Sutta-dharas, 94
Sūtras, 100, 109, 113
Svarājya constitution, 25

T

Tathāgata, 149
Tāvatiṁsa gods, 91, 175
Trade guilds, 164
Trigarta, 50, 61, 129
Trigarta Shaṣṭhas, 33, 103
Tuṇḍila-Jātaka, 165

U

Udichya, 103
Udvāhika, 84
Ukthikas, 171
Ultra-democratic methods of administration, 181
Unity, 178
Unnamed Republics, 117
Uparāja, 89, 91, 94, 138
Upajjhāyās, 70
Upostha ceremony, 160
Uttara seṭṭhis, 168
Uttara-kurus, 54
Utsava-saṇketa, 51, 129

V

Vaiśāli, 88, 89
Vairājya constitution, 25
Vajjian confederation, 34, 63, 69, 85, 86, 88, 138, 155, 175
Vanaparava, 130
Varṇāmāshrama, 116
Vaśiṣtha, 183
Vāhika, 54, 60, 62, 128
Vārta-śastropajīvi, 59, 60, 64, 113, 114, 124
Vārteya, 102, 105
Vāsudeva, 140
Vāssakāra, 86
Vātadhana, 129
Vedic age, 17
Venubana-kalānadaka-nivāpa, 158
Videhas, 35, 53, 85, 86, 87, 97, 128
Village republic, 98
Village economy, 98
Village *Panchas,* 200
Vinaya-pitaka, 33, 76, 153, 155, 157, 158, 161
Vinichaya-Mahāmatta, 94
Vivādaratnakāra, 136
The Vrāta, 67, 68, 111, 115
Vṛka, 61
Vṛjis, 62, 88, 124
Vṛṣṇis, 50, 59, 62, 130, 131, 132, 139, 140, 145, 146
Vrātya-stoma, 19

W

Weaknesses of the gaṇas, 186

Y

Yajñiks, 171
Yajñadattakah, 112
Yajñavalkya, 138
Yādavas, 25, 62, 139, 142
Yaudheyas, 38, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 62, 106, 108, 117, 119, 142, 144, 195
Yaudheya-coins, 48
Yebhyūsika, 82
Yodhajña-gamani, 115

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